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DECEMBER 1986

PLAY·METER

1986 THE YEAR IN REVIEW

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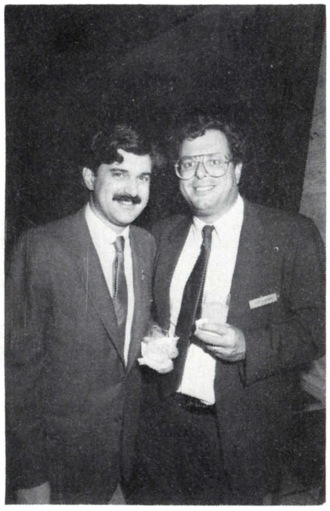
PAGE 35



PAGE 58

PAGE 77

PLAY·METER

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COIN-OPERATED ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

VOL. 12, NO. 21 CONTENTS DECEMBER/1986

FEATURES

THE YEAR IN REVIEW **35**

Play Meter's look back at the past year shows a steady industry upswing that began in late 1985. Operators, distributors, and manufacturers are finally confident that the industry has stabilized. Cranes and merchandisers gave collections a boost, pinball is strong, and manufacturers introduced some exceptional video games, both dedicated and kits.

Coinman: Rowe International's Joel Friedman and Michael Reinert **58**

The Rowe video jukebox has tantalized operators for three years, although the concept of combining audio and video goes back four decades. Rowe has held fast and steady to the idea of the video jukebox making operators money. It's taken three years they say, but Joel and Michael feel that things have never looked better for the video jukebox and the opportunities for operators.

Spanish Expo the best ever **77**

England's Coin Slot magazine editor, David Snook filed this report on the Spanish FER expo. After years of squabbling, the Spanish organizers demonstrated what could be done with the cooperation and undivided attention of Spain's wealthy industry.

DEPARTMENTS

UP FRONT	5
NEWS	7
ASK THE OPERATOR	45
YEAR IN REVIEW INDEX	46
FRANK'S CRANKS	68
RECORD CHARTS	74
CRITICS CORNER	82
PLAYERS' PICKS	87
SHARPE SHOOTER	93
TAX TIPS	100
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING	112

COVER: Designed by Dynamo Corporation (see cover story, page 6)

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Up Front

GETTING TO KNOW US

Valerie Cognevich

First, I'd like to wish all of our loyal readers and advertisers a very special and happy new year. Though I'm sure we must say this every year, it's still hard to believe that it is already 1987, the year of my 20th class reunion!

It's been quite a year for Play Meter and an encouraging one for the industry. If you glanced at the staff listing page, you noticed that there have been some staff changes, hopefully, the last of many since the death of our founder, Ralph Lally.

Since Play Meter has made so many changes over the past two years, a natural reaction to losing the man in charge, I thought it would be nice for all of you to see a picture of us and find out exactly who is putting this magazine together for you.

Carol Lally took over the publisher's title when her husband, Ralph, was killed. She was with Ralph when he started the magazine in 1974, but left the grind of the day-to-day job to raise her two daughters.

I joined Play Meter in 1977, telling Ralph I was not looking for a permanent job and he replying that he was not looking to hire anyone permanently. Ten years later, I have resigned myself to the fact that this is a permanent job! Ralph promoted me to editorial director in 1982, a position I gave up last year to be able to devote more time to my four children who are growing up as fast as kids are known to do. However, the editor we hired last year left recently and I, once again, have taken on the responsibilities that job requires.

Bonnie Theard joined us a year ago, and like me, came on board for a supposedly temporary job-filling in until our new editor started. She was not certain whether she was ready to return to a full time job after leaving the work force eight years ago to raise her two boys. The way things look, I'm sure she'll be here a long time. she has an extensive background in writing-advertising agency experience and editing home office publications for Pan American Life Insurance Company and a local bank-and has been promoted to managing editor. Bonnie has acquired a feel for this industry that calls for a commitment many are not willing to make. I feel extremely lucky to have someone of her caliber taking on more responsibility with the magazine.

Jack Lally, Ralph's brother, is Play Meter's comptroller. Though he has his own business in Baton Rouge, he has taken an active role in all facets of the magazine and the ACME show, and is now training the staff on some new, sophisticated typesetting equipment.

Renee Pierson has been with Play Meter over six years as circulation manager. However, she had, many times before joining the staff, volunteered to help out when we were in a bind. Her husband, David, was Play Meter's editor and advertising manager from 1977 until he left last year. Renee has taken the circulation management from typewritten cards, to an outside computer company, to having an in-house circulation management computer.

Lenore Bramblett joined the staff four years ago after closing her own perfume shop in the French Quarter. She is the one who sends the invoices and the one who calls if you don't pay your bills! She swears she is the least liked person in the industry! She has completely organized our collection and billing department.

Front row: Jack, Bonnie, Renee, Rusty
Back row: Margret, Lenore, Sally, Valerie, Carol

John "Rusty" Storbeck has been doing free lance writing for Play Meter for about a year. He was previously an editor for an ad agency and a Russian translator for the Library of Congress before moving to New Orleans last year. He currently does free lance writing for several New Orleans newspapers and magazines. He has agreed to work for Play Meter on a part time basis, working on news and feature stories. He says the coin-op business is one he enjoys being a part of.

Margret Vincent has been Play Meter's graphics designer for four years and is responsible for some of our best cover designs. Her job experience includes chief illustrator for Boeing Services International, designing posters (the ones I've seen are fantastic!) and designing Mardi Gras floats. On her original cover designs she always conceals her logo (MEW) which we have had fun looking for. She is extremely talented and has taken on a larger responsibility with the new typesetting equipment.

Sally Blakemore has been the art director for some beautiful magazines including Theatre Crafts and New York Magazine and she is a cartoonist. She designed our new look and we are privileged to have her working with Play Meter.

Those are the people behind Play Meter, the industry magazine you have trusted to bring you the industry news. We have a great staff, one that works together, something no company can survive without.

Dynamo adds hardware system to product line

Texans are famous for building big and the Texas-based Dynamo Corporation that started small 14 years ago has steadily grown to meet that image.

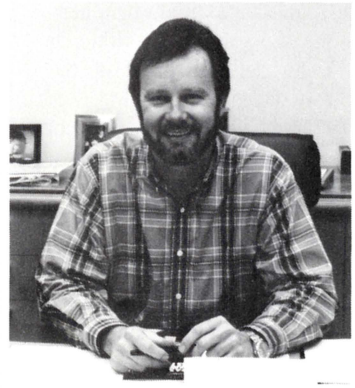
In addition to a successful product line featuring coin-op pool tables and soccer tables, the *Crazy Crane* merchandiser, plus the new *Dynamo Hockey*, the company contracts with manufacturers to build video game cabinets, assemble the games, and ship to distributors.

Contracting began in 1982. Many well-known games have come from the Dynamo assembly line, among them *Ikari Warriors* for Tradewest; *Karate Champ*, *Kung Fu Master*, and *Commando* for Data East; *Birdie King* for Coin-It/Monroe, and *Mr. Do!* for Bally during its distributor days.

The newest addition to this list is *Victory Road* from Tradewest. In this game as in *Ikari Warriors*, Dynamo uses the universal video hardware system it designed and started building last year.

Previously, Dynamo received components including pc board, monitor, graphics, and control panel from various suppliers. Dynamo then produced a custom cabinet built to customer specifications, produced the wire harness, assembled the components in the cabinets, and finished it out.

According to Bill Rickett, president of Dynamo, "As long as manufacturers continue to bring out good kits, there are going to be many operators who will want those kits to be in good hardware. We're finding that many distributors are doing installations of new kits in our cabinet for display on their showroom floors.



Bill Rickett, Dynamo president.

Now that we have the design of the system perfected, we're going to start an advertising campaign. Our thrust will be to educate the operator as to how easy it is to install a kit into our hardware system. As a result, we expect to see more system buying from the operators."

He explained that the dividing line between an upright and a kit is the money earned. "Typically, higher earning games come out as dedicated, and the good earning games come out as kits.

"Operators are very good buyers in the video game business," said Rickett. "They know how to put a pencil to the earnings and know what price they can afford to pay. Sometimes there will be a kit that has extremely good earnings, like *Arkanoid*, and the operator gets a bargain.

"Operators can take a Dynamo system and a kit and have a low-cost dedicated video game that is easily convertible to another new low-cost dedicated video."

A bank of *Ikari Warriors* games in the Dynamo video hardware system.

Dynamo employees prepare video game wire harnesses at the Richland Hills, Tex. facility.

NEWS

BALLY SUES TRUMP, ADOPTS SHAREHOLDER PLAN

On December 5, 1986 Bally Manufacturing Corp. filed suit in U.S. District Court in Camden, N.J. against New York real estate developer Donald Trump, alleging that Trump and related entities violated federal securities and antiturst laws.

Trump owns significant property in New York and two casinos in Atlantic City. He recently has acquired 9.6 percent of Bally's 30 million outstanding shares.

In a statement issued the same day, Bally announced that it has retained Drexel Burnham Lambert, Inc. to explore various possibilities for the restructuring of Bally designed to enhance longterm shareholder value.

Bally said its board of directors adopted a shareholder rights plan intended to prevent accumulations of Bally stock under circumstances which could jeopordize Bally's Nevada and New Jersey gaming licenses, to deter coercive and unfair takeover attempts, and to encourage potential acquirers to negotiate with Bally in advance regarding any acquisition proposal.

Bally has been considering for some time various possibilities for restructuring or repositioning the company. Its board has considered a proposed shareholder rights plan initially presented September 20, 1986.

In its complaint, Bally seeks, among other relief, to enjoin further purchases of Bally stock by the defendants, and a judgment declaring Bally's shareholders rights plan to be valid.

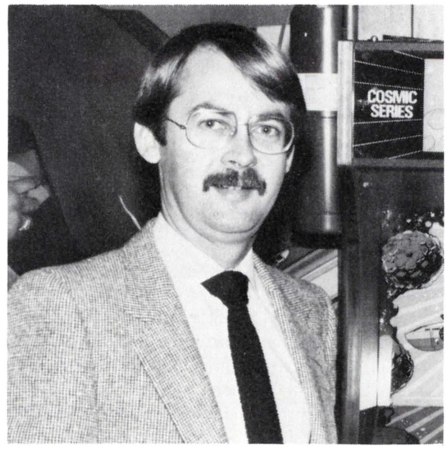
Robert Mullane, president, chairman, and chief executive officer of Bally Manufacturing Corp. said, "The board of directors of Bally is committed to the goal of enhancing shareholder values. The shareholder rights plan is intended to ensure that any party seeking control of Bally affords all shareholders fair and equitable treatment and maximum value for their shares and that Bally stock will not be accumulated under circumstances that could jeopordize Bally's gaming licenses."

Under the shareholder rights plan, ten-year preferred stock purchase rights will be distributed to holders of record of Bally common stock as of the close of business on December 17, 1986.

SNK OPENS U.S. OFFICE

SNK, the Japanese company that has given the industry such hits as *Ikari Warriors*, *Alpha Mission*, *TNK 3*, and *Vanguard*, has opened an office in the United States. Paul Jacobs, an industry veteran with many years experience, has been named the executive vice president and general manager of the Sunnyvale, Calif. company.

According to Jacobs, the company was so pleased with the success of *Ikari Warriors* that the decision was made to reopen in the U.S. SNK had an office headed by Takahito Yasuki, who bought it from SNK and renamed it Romstar.



Paul Jacobs

The twelve-year-old company's first game was *Vanguard*, which it licensed to the now defunct Centuri. Its most recent game is *Victory Road*, licensed to Tradewest, the company that licensed *Ikari Warriors* from SNK.

"The first game we will market under SNK will be out in January," noted Jacobs. "It is tentatively named *Bermuda Triangle*."

SNK will continue to license games, and, like other Japanese companies, also will market some itself.

SNK's new address and phone number are: 246 Sobrante Way, Sunnyvale, CA 94086. Telephone 408/736-0446; FAX 408/736-0446.

VALLEY BUYS IDEA, SPONSORS VALLEY CUP

The Valley Co. of Bay City, Mich. purchased the assets of Industrial Design Electronic Associates (IDEA) of Sycamore, Ill. on December 5. IDEA will no longer exist as a company, although the entire staff will be retained as Valley employees involved in the manufacture of Valley's two new electronic dart games.

Valley and IDEA worked together on the development and manufacturing of *Valley Cougar Darts* and *Valley Royal Darts*. Both games will be manufactured in Sycamore, Ill. The IDEA line of dart games will no longer be made.

IDEA is presently involved in litigation which will not affect Valley.

During a special press conference at the AMOA Expo '86, Charles Milhem, president of The Valley

Charles Milhem fields questions from the press after announcing the Valley Cup International dart competition.

Company, announced Valley support of the AMOA National Dart Association and company sponsorship of an international competition - the Valley Cup International.

Valley introduced its first coin-operated dart games with American and international-size targets at the AMOA Expo. Valley has been successful promoting pool tables through its Valley National 8-ball League Association (VNEA) and would like to aid the development and growth of dart games in the same manner.

Dates for the Valley Cup International are set for February 20-22 at the Hilton Hotel in St. Petersburg, Fla. Participation in the event is limited to AMOA Dart Association sanctioned players through their charter holders. Entries are limited to the first 16 applications received.

Playoff tournaments, or U.S. Team Elimination Events, in men's singles, women's singles, and mixed doubles will be run by charter holders. Qualifying players will compete as individuals in the Florida international finals. Winners will be placed on the Valley USA International Team to compete in Florida for the Valley Cup and later in Germany for the Lowen International, the German Cup. The German competition in Bingen, Germany is scheduled for October 1987.

If the Valley Cup or NSM-Lowen Cup is won by the American team, the cup will be held in the U.S. until the next competition. Valley will provide air transportation to Germany for the NSM-Lowen Cup; NSM will provide lodging. Valley will provide lodging for all challengers in the Florida competition and sponsor a buffet lunch and awards dinner. Air fare will be handled by charter holders entering teams.

For further information, and to obtain a Valley International Elimination Tournament Guide, contact Alan Schafer, vice president of marketing, The Valley Co., 333 Morton St., Bay City, MI 48707, (517) 892-4536.

ACME '87 OFFERS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The 1987 American Coin Machine Exposition (ACME), to be held March 20-22 at the Rivergate in New Orleans has scheduled nearly 40 hours of educational programming including four free Open Forums and a special two-day, six-hour Advanced Technical Session.

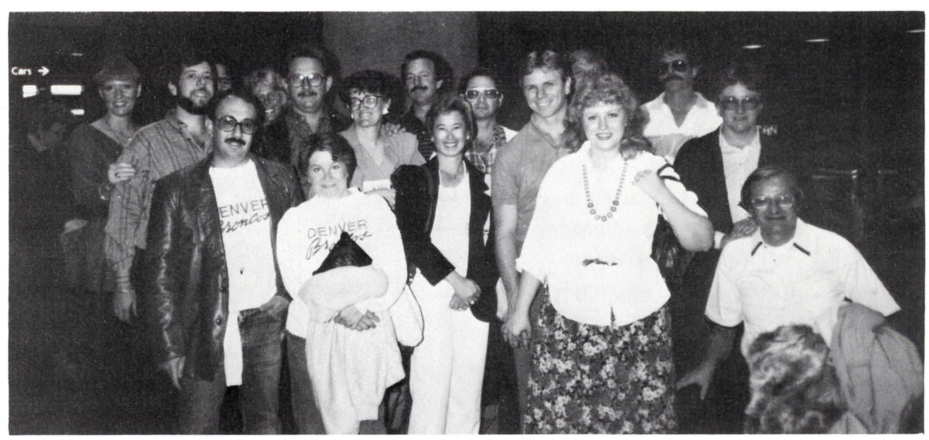
The Advanced Technical Session, a first in coin-op trade events, will be divided into Comprehensive Troubleshooting Parts I and II, and will be an in-depth, hands-on look at all aspects of repairs and troubleshooting techniques. The fee for pre-registered attendees is $50 per session or $100 for both Parts I and II. All educational sessions will be held in the Rivergate Exhibition Center.

ACME '87 seminar coordinator Valerie Cognevich commented, "There was a clear indication from the ACME '86 seminar evaluation forms that there is a definite need for additional and more advanced technical training among operators and technicians.

"In a continual effort to maintain ACME's position as the leading educational forum for the coin-operated entertainment industry, we've responded with this unique session that addresses a multitude of technical subjects. Operators should take advantage of this special technical training not available anywhere else."

Widely discussed topics in the industry today will be featured in the educational sessions, including technical, managerial, legislative, financial, and marketing trends. The cost for this portion of the program for pre-registered attendees is $20 per session or three sessions for $50.

The open forums include a Firing Line Panel for both pinball and video composed of manufacturers, operators, and distributors. Standardization will be the focus of another open forum, with moderator Todd Erickson of



A Colorado Game Exchange group traveled to Bally's Grand Hotel, Las Vegas, in October for a trip won during a promotional campaign this past suummer. Left to right are: front row--Mark Shafner, Beth Shafner, Myndel Pozner, Kim Summers, and Bruce Bauldridge; second row--Rich Babich, Dan Hillman, Sue Hillman, Norm Pozner, Mitch Summers, and Diane Bauldridge; third row--Bev Babich, Tom Petter and his wife, Dan Sunday,Dean Ernst, and David Bouyea. Rich Babich, company president, said operators have asked to "get the next promotion underway so they can win another trip".

Summit Amusement and panelists Joe Dillon of Williams, Craig Johnson of Tataka Amusement, and Steve Blattspieler, Bally Midway Manufacturing.

To gain insight into the latest and most effective marketing strategies and how they can improve business, attend "How Promotional Activities Can Boost Your Bottom Line", a free session with speaker Mark Whittaker of Bally's Aladdin's Castle.

Other scheduled speakers and their topics are: Bill Nemgar of Salmon River Amusements, "Increasing Profits Through Leagues: Make Them Work For You"; Frank Seninsky of Alpha Omega Sales, "Cutting Expenses and Increasing Profits"; John Huddleston of Williams Electronics Games, Inc., "Private Pay Phones: Where Is This Industry Now?"; Sharon Harris of Stan Harris & Co. and John Purcell a Penn. State Legislator, "Legislative Update"; Rich Babich of Babich & Associates/Colorado Game Exchange, "How To Evaluate Your Business and Plan For Future Growth"; Todd Erickson, of Summit Amusement, "Maximizing Profits From Pinballs"; Bill Cravens of Capcom U.S.A. Inc., "Protecting Locations Through Agreements/Using Contracts as Sales Tools"; Ted Furkin of All Star Amusements, "Computerizing Your Business"; and Howard Levine, "Taxes and Accounting for the Operator".

ACME '87 co-sponsors are the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) and *Play Meter* magazine. According to David Weaver, executive vice president of AAMA, "With 35 percent ot total salable exhibit space contracted for already, we're strongly encouraged by the early returns. Having the ACME '87 in New Orleans is just the 'frosting on the cake' for what we expect to be a better than ever show for the coin-op industry."

Carol Lally, publisher of *Play Meter* added, "At a recent annual trade event it was clearly evident that business was good, and there was a positive feeling among exhibitors and attendees alike that they were encouraged by the direction business was heading. What's really exciting is the high level of confidence and determination projected within the industry as we move ahead into 1987."

Accent On ACME '87, a newsletter providing information about exhibitors, seminars, tavel, housing, and special activities planned for the event, has been published by W.T. Glasgow, Inc., ACME Show Management.

Operators who want to be added to the newsletter mailing list or need more information on ACME '87 can contact W.T. Glasgow, Inc., Show Management, 16066 S. Park Ave., South Holland, Il 60473, or call (312) 333-9292.

AMOA AND NCMI MERGE

The boards of directors of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) and the National Coin Machine Institute (NCMI) have voted to merge the two organizations.

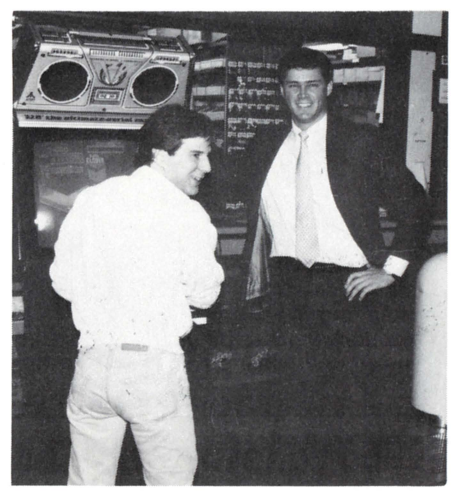
AMOA, a 1,500 member organization of operators, distributors, and manufacturers, is headquartered in Chicago and serves the coin-operated games, music, and vending industry. NCMI, a 100 member organization representing the legislative, taxation, and public relations interests of operators and manufacturers of coin-operated cigarette, music, and other vending equipment, is presently located in Philadelphia.

Following the merger, two designated NCMI members will be elected to the AMOA board of directors. NCMI activities now merge into the AMOA Chicago office. NCMI members meeting AMOA membership qualifications will become AMOA members.

MUSIC-VEND/DUNIS HAS POST-AMOA EVENTS

Music-Vend/Dunis Distributing Co. held post-AMOA and NAMA showings of amusement and music equipment at three of its Washington state offices in November.

New equipment introduced at the Amusement and Music Operators Association Expo in early November and the National Automatic Merchandising Association Convention and Trade Show in late October was on display. Manufacturer representatives were on hand to answer questions and offer "hands-on" experience for attendees. Among them were Greg Rice of Atari, Jolly Backer of Bally Sente, and Jerry Momoda of Sega.

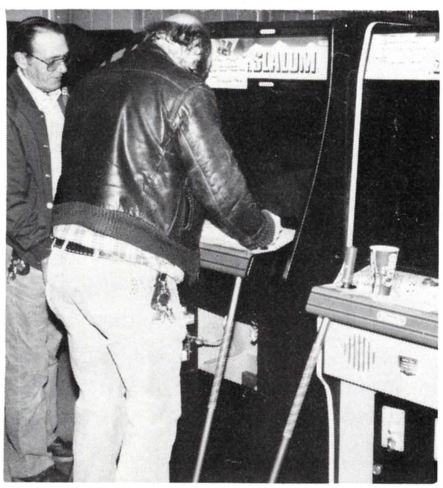


Vance West of Puyallup, Wash., left, tries *720 Degrees* with Greg Rice of Atari nearby.

The Spokane office showing was November 14; the Seattle office show was November 18; and the Portland showing was November 21. Refreshments and door prizes were included at all events.

Jerry Momoda of Sega, standing, explains features of *Out Run* to Bill Masterman of Tacoma, Wash.

Bill Miller of Everett, Wash., left, and Jolly Backer of Bally Sente with *Street Football.*



Seattle operators try Nintendo's *VS. Slalom.* Left to right are: Fred Galeno, Tom Jordan, and Pat McGuire.

Merit-Nomac co-sponsors WAMO tournament

Merit-Nomac's *Pub Time Darts* has been selected by the Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators (WAMO) as the official machine of the third annual Wisconsin State Electronic Dart Tournament scheduled for April 24-26 1987.

According to Kirk McKennon, Merit director of tournaments and marketing, "The 1986 WAMO tournament included nearly 1,000 players and awarded over $20,000 in cash and prizes. WAMO has used the tournament as a member service and has increased state association membership because of it. With more operators participating and a larger than ever player base, they may well surpass last year's outstanding achievements."

McKennon commended the WAMO dart committee as knowledgeable "dartologists", starting with chairman Dave Fonder, folllowed by John Spears, Tony Urso, Michael Bohrer, Dale Saunders, and Craig Barlament. Joe Phillips, executive director of WAMO, will handle publicity, accommodations, and much of the detail work.

Merit-Nomac endorses a strong dart promotion program and has assembled a national team of league and promotion specialists, headed by McKennon and Howard Smoyer, to work with operators and distributors to further the growth of dart programs.

"Let's face it," said Merit-Nomac vice president Mort Ansky, "the location end of the business is having problems today. High taxes, outrageous insurance, and not enough people are causing taverns to fail daily. The operator who does not respond with leagues and tournaments that deliver people to his locations could find himself gone wrong with them.

"Our feeling is that the league player who puts quarters in our machines and spends money across the bar week after week is the person whose loyalty is most sought by the operator. Open events draw the shark or hustler and undermine league play."

Ansky believes the concept of having events that cannot be entered except through participation in operator-run leagues solidifies the operator's position in his market. "League-sponsored and association events reward and bolster the efforts made by the operator," he added.

He pledged "on location" support both directly and through Merit-Nomac distributors. The company has recently been successful with its "Beat the Champ" program where operators were starting leagues and wished to draw more attention to machines already in a location.

The company manufactures *Bull Buster Darts* as well as *Pub Time Darts.*

For more information on the upcoming WAMO tournament, contact Merit Industries, P.O. Box 5004, 2525 State Road, Bensalem, PA 19020. Call 1-800/523-2760 or (215) 639-4700.

Status acquires Vega Vending

Status Game Corporation has announced acquisition of the vending machine business, name, and substantially all of the assets of Vega Vending, Inc. for an undisclosed amount of cash. This move will more than double Status' annual revenues.

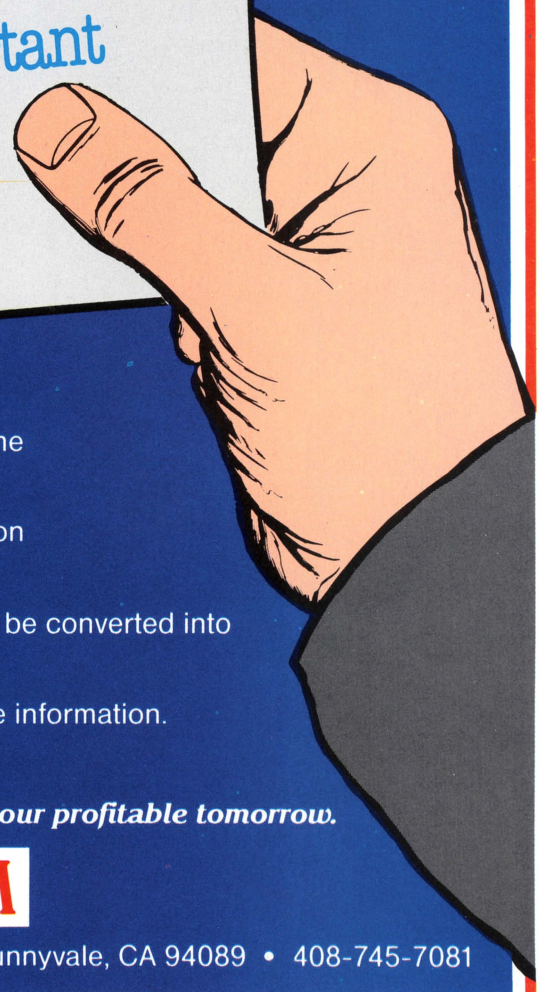
Vega operates about 1400 vending machines in the Las Vegas area in casinos, McCarren International Airport, and a military base. It has annual revenues of approximately $5.5 million.

With this acquisition, Status' combined operations in Las Vegas will include over 3,000 game units and vending machines in nearly 900 locations.

Status is presently licensed by the Nevada Gaming Commission to manufacture, sell, and operate gaming

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR 1987

1. Buy more CAPCOM games.
2. Don't eat too much.
3. Be on time for everything.
4. Exercise more.
5. Be nicer to in-laws.
6. Remember important birthdays.



It's easy to see what is really important. Let our new game

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get your new year off to a super start. The great collection figures can set the pace for a profitable 1987 for you.

Don't forget...your old "Section Z" machines can easily be converted into

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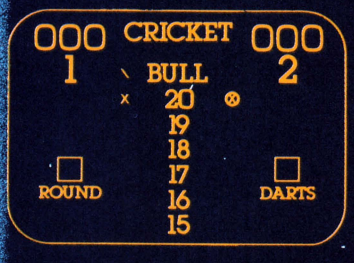
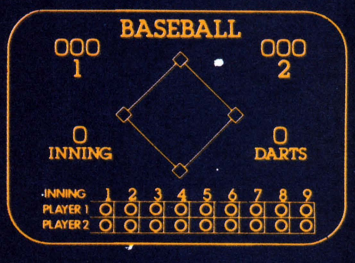
CRICKET



BASEBALL



Eight Games

25¢	50¢
301	301 Dbl in/Dbl out
Count-up	501
Cut Throat	701 Open in/Dbl out
	Baseball
	Cricket

Arachnid INC

P.O. Box 2901 Rockford, IL 61132-2901

800-435-8319 (IL) 815-654-0212

equipment in the state. It's gaming license application for Atlantic City is pending.

The company recently announced plans to open a casino in Henderson, Nev. in mid-1987. Corporate headquarters are in Newington, Conn. where its coin-operated video amusement games are manufactured; the gaming division headquarters are in Las Vegas.

FIRST U.S. *Lazer Maze* FRANCHISE OPENS

The first U.S. *Lazer Maze* franchise held its grand opening December 12 at the Sherman Oaks Galleria in Los Angeles with a certain time slot set aside for participation by Special Olympians.

Franchise owners Lenny Sigalov and Dani Siegel will donate profits from the first two weeks of *Lazer Maze* operation to the California Special Olympics to assist its worthwhile programs.

Lazer Maze is a new concept in player-interactive video games (see *Play Meter* July 15 issue, page 11 News, page 88 New Products) developed by High Technology Recreation Industries (HTR) Inc. of Vancouver.

It is a walk-through video fantasy in which players enter the maze armed with a lazer blaster and combat animated robots while traveling through four cloud-filled chambers. The game offers three levels of difficulty and three types of lazer blasters. Robots attack in a random 360-degree pattern. The maze has digital sound and 32 mini-computers operating the special effects systems that surround the player.

After trying their skill and reflexes against the "alien invaders", athletes and their families and sponsors enjoyed an evening reception and buffet with film and television stars, sports personalities, political and community leaders, all of whom were encouraged to compete in *Lazer Maze*.

Anyone interested in *Lazer Maze* franchise information can contact Lazer Maze International, Inc., 1033 La Posada Drive, Suite 160, Austin, TX 78752, (512) 459-0508.

ROWE PUBLISHES VIDEO JUKEBOX GUIDE

Rowe International, Inc. has published two presentation books on its *Video Jukebox* in response to operator requests for advice and expertise on approaching locations.

"We've developed this sales aid to assist operators who are introducing the Rowe *Video Jukebox* to their locations," said Joel Friedman, vice president of the company.

"We've found that the *Video Jukebox* needs to be presented differently than the traditional unit. Most operators have a clear picture of the income and traffic-building potential of the unit, but often the location owners have yet to grasp the advantages."

One book is addressed to operators only. The second book, "A New Profit Picture", is addressed to the location and suggested for operator use on location calls. It is an illustrated guide explaining how the *Video Jukebox* helps draw in new customers while keeping regulars. It also describes choices of video programs that allow locations to

MOUNTAIN COIN HOSTS OPEN HOUSE

Mountain Coin Machine Distributors of Des Moines, Iowa, opened its doors to 150 midwestern operators for an open house on November 12.

New games and vending equipment were on display from 30 manufacturers. Representatives from those companies included Bob Hodges of Arachnid, Jay Wood of Ardac, Ken Anderson of Cinematronics, Sue Jarocki of Data East, Mark Struhs of Dynamo, Dave Rubenstein of Merit, Mike Minor of Nintendo, Lenore Sayers of Sega, Earl Charlton of Wittenborg, Jack Martin of Litton, Bill White of Imperial Cup, Charlie Pavia of CoinCo, and Mike Toohey of Mars Electronics.

Door prizes with an estimated value of $15,000 were awarded in the late afternoon. The prizes were donated by Mountain Coin and manufacturing companies. American Shuffleboard donated the two largest prizes, a 14-foot *Shuffleboard*, won by Dale French of French Amusement, Washington, Iowa, and a *Bumper Pool* won by Pat Hulsey of Tavco, Inc., Ames Iowa.

Operators await door prize drawing at Mountain Coin open house.

- 100% Solid State!
- Complete Light Package!
- Complete Music'n Sound Package!
- Unauthorized Intrusion Sensors and Alarm!
- Dual Coin Mechanisms!
- Extra Large Viewing Area!
- Available with Joy stick or Button Player Controls!
- Prize Detection System!
- Locking Front Wheels!
- Sturdy Plywood Cabinet!

77½" HT. x 25" WD. x 37¾" DEPTH

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- Optional Ticket Dispenser!
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- Total Adjustability!

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Outside N.J.
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SMS manufacturing corporation

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tailor the video music to their clientele.

The guide also discusses special features of the unit and compares its cost-effectiveness with live bands and DJ's. The *Video Jukebox* plays 160 record selections and 40 videos.

For more information, or to receive a copy, contact your Rowe distributor or write Rowe International, Inc., 75 Troy Hills Road, Whippany, NJ 07981, or call (201) 887-0400.

Megaphone to acquire Video Laser Systems

Megaphone International, Inc. has reached an agreement in principle to acquire Video Laser Systems, Inc., manufacturer of the *Audix 2000* jukebox conversion kit that converts audio jukeboxes into laser-disc video jukeboxes.

Megaphone will combine its telecommunications software and marketing experience with Video Laser's application of its laser jukeboxes into an interactive cable television music video network.

Under the agreement, Video Laser Systems will be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Megaphone. John Nelson, president of Video Laser Systems, will remain as president of the subsidiary.

The acquisition is based on a stock for stock exchange and will allow Video Laser Systems to increase distribution of its video jukeboxes while seeking to establish cable/broadcast video potential.

The new concept will mean that viewers of the cable music video channels will be able to phone in selections. "Viewers will actually have a jukebox on their home television and see the music video they want," said Nelson. "It's the first real interaction allowing television viewers to select their own programming.

The merger is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Hanson previews new equipment

Hanson Distributing of Bloomington, Minn. welcomed operators from six states and representatives from several manufacturers to a September equipment showing and update on the state of the industry.

The Valley Company presented its *ZD-4* pool table. Tom Shelton of Valley detailed the company's lease program and announced the introduction of *Valley Cougar Darts* and *Valley Royal Darts.*

Merit Industries' Ben Santucci showed the new, updated *Riviera* video poker and hinted that Merit will soon be updating its line of adult-oriented pieces along the lines of *Trivia* and *Phraze Craze.*

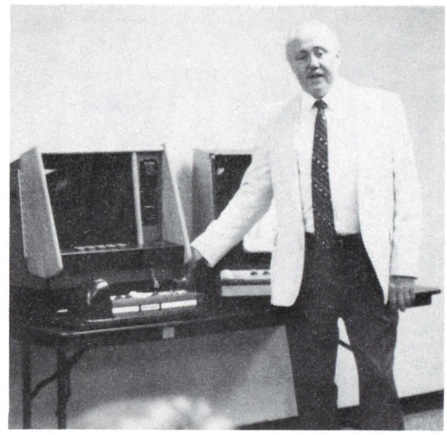
The Seeburg *SCD-1 Crusader* compact disc jukebox also was displayed at the show. Joe Pankus of Seeburg discussed features of the jukebox and its place in today's market. Warren McDonald answered service and design questions.

Cinematronics' Ken Anderson previewed the new countertop Cinemat System cabinet now available for both *World Series* and *Alley Master*, and a kit to convert existing Merit countertops to *World Series.*

SMS Manufacturing displayed its *Skill Crane* and Jim Pietrangelo of SMS discussed the adjustable and versatile crane features.

Ben Santucci of Merit with the *Riviera* video poker.

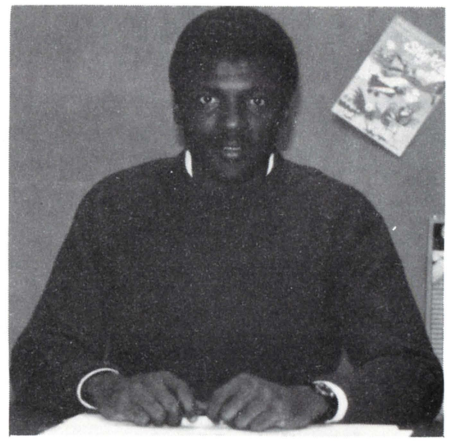
Jim Pietrangelo of SMS, left, shows crane features to Norm Pink of Advance Carter, Minneapolis.



Ken Anderson of Cinematronics demonstrates the *World Series* countertop conversion kit.

Sun Corp. adds Wallace

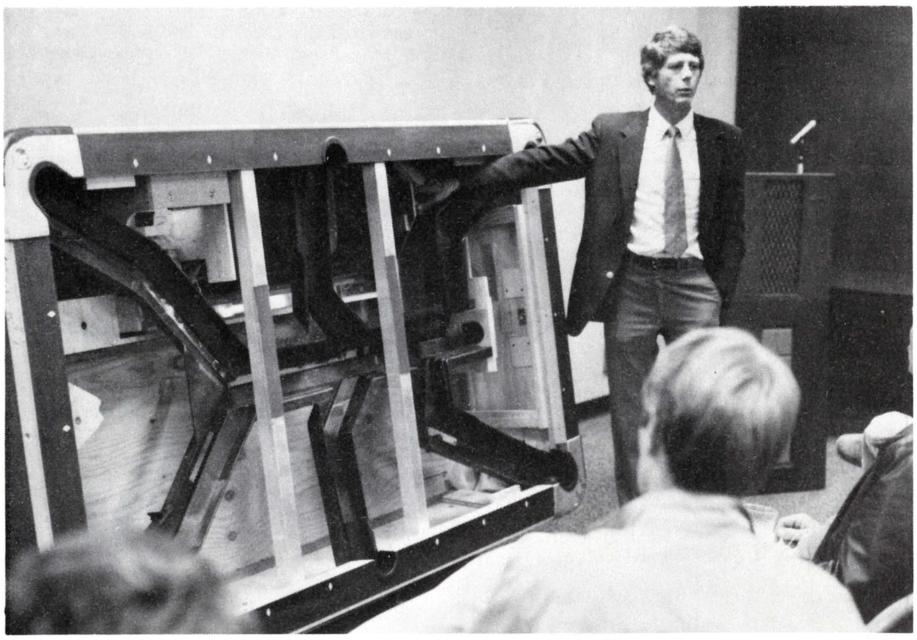
Sun Corp. of America has announced the addition of Mark Wallace to its staff in the sales and operations division.



Mark Wallace

Wallace was general manager of Coin-It Companies for three years and most recently was general manager of United Skates of America's Chicago operation. He will assist Richard Robbins, vice president of Sun Corp.

According to Joe Robbins, president of Sun Corp. the company's expansion in sales, marketing, and manufacturing are due to response to Sun's kits, *Quartet 2* and *SkyKid.*



Tom Shelton of Valley shows the *ZD-4* pool table.

50TH STATE HAS EQUIPMENT PREVIEW

50th State Coin-Op of Ewa Beach, Hawaii held a pre-AMOA Expo equipment preview and reception on October 23 at the Hilton Hawaiian Village in Honolulu.

Thirty-two games were on display for the 70 attendees to view and experience "hands-on". Manufacturer representatives present to talk with Hawaiian operators included Kim Yaffa of Status Games, Brian Duke of Nintendo of America, and Jolly Backer of Bally Sente.

In addition to the games and refreshments, attendees signed for door prizes, among them *Super Mario Bros.* software donated by Nintendo of America, a *Night Stocker* kit donated by Bally Sente, and a variety of plush animals donated by Merchandise International.

50th State, established less than a year ago, now represents 17 manufacturers and distributes amusement machines, parts and service to operators in the Hawaiian Islands.

Staff members include Kane Fernandez, chairman; Linda Fernandez, president; Warren Asing, general manager; and Bob Peters, sales representative.

Enjoying the 50th State Coin-Op show and reception are, left to right: Linda Fernandez of 50th State, Jolly Backer of Bally Sente, Kim Yaffa of Status Games, Brian Duke of Nintendo of America, and Kane Fernandez of 50th State..

N.Y. CITY ASSOCIATION ELECTS OFFICERS

The Music and Amusement Association of New York City elected new officers for the coming year at its general membership meeting held November 20 at the Lauraine Murphy Restaurant in Manhasset.

Officers are: Howard Herman of County Amusement Co., president; Allan Mizrahi of Scientific Entertainment, Inc., vice president; Mike Bruck of Long Island Tobacco Co., Inc., secretary; Robert Herman of Ace Amusement, treasurer; Pete Horowitz of Crosstown Operating Corp., sargeant at arms; Jack Hearn of LaSalle Vending Corp. and Ralph Ceraldi of C&C Vending, board members for three year terms.

The other purpose of the meeting was to discuss the present status of poker-type machines and other grey area games, report on the AMOA Expo, give the New York state association report, and discuss old and new business.

In the president's report, Howard Herman commended Tilford Gross, Frank Calland, Harry Benner, and Ron Koppelman for their efforts to bring in new members. "The more members we have the stronger we become," noted Herman. The association recently has been fighting

cases in which the State Liquor Authority has brought charges against bar locations with poker-type machines that gave free credits.

NYSCMA PLANS TRADE SHOW, HOLDS CONVENTION

The New York State Coin Machine Association (NYSCMA) has announced plans for its second annual trade show to be held April 3-5 1987 at the Turf Inn, Albany, N.Y.

Exhibit space is allotted on a first-come first-serve basis. Participating exhibitors thusfar are Betson Enterprises, Brandt Systems, Coin Machine Distributors, Cummins Allison Corp., Dan Brechner and Co., Don Records Corp., J-S Sales Co., Mondial International, Mobile Record Service, Roth Novelty Co., T.O.P. Distributing Co., and The Valley Co.

To reserve exhibit space or obtain more information contact Curtiss Matterson, executive director of NYSCMA, 427 Kenwood Ave. Delmar, NY 12054, or call (518) 439-0981s

In addition to this spring activity, the association looks forward to its annual fall convention, held September 19-21 at the Fallsview Resort Hotel in the Catskills. This year more than 60 association members, spouses, and guests attended the event.

Jack Driscoll of A.B. Equipment Co., right, is congratulated by Bill LaHart, NYSCMA president, upon receiving a special award for his 53 year contribution to the industry.

The convention program included business meetings, elections to the board of directors, award presentations, door prizes, and a golf tournament.

Bill LaHart of Upstate Vending Service, Lake Placid, current president and awards chairman for the event, announced that a special plaque would be sent to Steve Hochman in recognition of his years of service on the board and nearly two years as chief executive officer of the association.

An award for outstanding contributions was presented to Jack Driscoll of A.B. Equipment Co., Avon, for his 53 years of service to the association and the industry.

Bill LaHart, NYSCMA president, right, presents door prize to Ralph Ceraldi of C&C Vending at the association's annual convention.

A certificate of appreciation was presented to Bob Prescott of Valley Vending Service, Plattsburgh, in recognition of his service on the board. Prescott has retired as vice president from the northern region.

During the business meeting officers and committee chairmen reported on the current status of the association, legislative progress made during the year, and plans for the future.

In addition, three regional directors for each of six regions in the state were elected for staggered three-year terms as follows: Central Region-Sam Aleccia, Don Erickson, and Robert Sullivan; Hudson Valley Region-Vic McCarthy, Michael Mulqueen, and Richard Prutting; Metropolitan Region-Jack Hearn, Robert Herman, and Mike Izzo; Mohawk Valley Region-Ron Bruno, Vic Conte, and Dan Morin; Northern Region-Charles Brenon, Steve Hardy, and Bill LaHart; Western Region-Randy Bergman, Dick Driscoll, and Jim McKnight.

Alternates are: Ray Squires, Howard Herman, and Bob Prescott.

Door prizes and awards for the golf tournament were contributed by Mohawk Skill Games, Catskill Amusements, Upstate Vending, Victor Conte Sales, Darrt Amusement, Bruno Novelty Co., Don Records Corp., and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.

Ralph and Muriel Ceraldi of C&C Vending, Coran, won a door prize of a picnic basket with four bottles of vintage Bully Hill wine and an imported three-liter bottle of Italian burgundy. Steve Hardy of A.S. Hardy Co., Malone, received the Jack LaHart Memorial golf trophy.

PAMMA UPDATE

The Pennsylvania Amusement and Music Machine Association (PAMMA) stated in its November newsletter that Senate Bill 383, regarding legislation on the legalization of video poker games, is dead for this session.

The issue was not voted on in the last voting session of this year, meaning the bill will have to be re-introduced to the House and Senate at the beginning of the new session that starts in late January.

PAMMA pledges to continue working on other legislative items dealing with the coin-op industry in the next session. The association has gained an additional lobbyist in Richard Gmerek, who has formed a partnerhip with John Milliron Associates, PAMMA's political representative.

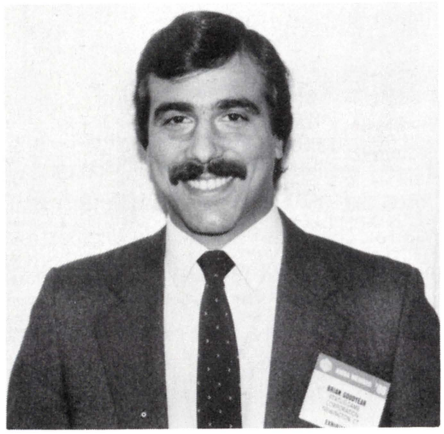
PAMMA has moved its offices to 12 North Third St., Harrisburg, PA 17101. The phone numbers stay at

1-800/521-7778 (PA only) and (717) 232-5322.

STATUS PROMOTES YAFFA, ADDS GOODYEAR

Status Game Corporation has promoted Kimberly Yaffa to west coast director of sales and added Brian Goodyear as sales representative for the central northeast region.

Kimberly Yaffa



Brian Goodyear

Yaffa has been with Status for four years in the sales and marketing division. She is now based in Los Angeles to provide increased service to the company's distributors. The Status west coast office number is 1-800/835-7434.

Goodyear has seven years of previous sales experience. He is based in the Newington, Conn. headquarters. Thusfar he is enjoying his association with the coin-op amusements, commenting, "In this industry you're selling fun and excitement."

COIN MACHINE HOSTS 200 OPERATORS

More than 200 operators and factory representatives attended the October 29 open house hosted by Coin Machine Distributors, Inc. at its Elmsford, N.Y. showroom to see the latest in games and redemption equipment.

Rowe International executives demonstrated the combination compact-disc jukebox unit and the complete line of Rowe products. Those present included Joel Friedman, Jerry Gordon, Bill Halpern, Jerry Hejtmanek, and Ted Lloyd.

Jim Newlander of Atari showed *Championship Sprint* and Joel Gilbert of Nintendo displayed *Play Choice 10* and *VS. Slalom.*

Three representatives of AT&T demonstrated the *AT&T Private Pay Phone.*

The open house also was the occasion to introduce two new Coin Machine staff members-Dave MacCellam and Dale Rockwell in the vending division.

A buffet and desserts were part of the open house as were door prizes. Catskill Amusements, Inc. of Hurleyville, N.Y. won an Atari *Road Runner* kit; Ace Amusement of Brooklyn, N.Y. won a service kit; Tolve's Amusement of Rye, N.Y. won a Coinco kit; and Twilight Amusement in Conn. won a *VS. Super Mario Bros.* kit.

NINE COUNTRIES SIGN FOR IMA

More than 134 companies from nine countries have announced participation in the IMA 8th International Amusement and Vending Trade Fair at the Frankfort Fairgrounds in Frankfort, West Germany, January 29-31.

For the first time IMA will occupy two floors of Hall 5 and exhibit service and vending equipment separately from amusement machines.

According to Gerhard Korber, IMA project manager at Heckmann GmbH, "The amusement section will soon be fully booked, while in the service and vending section there is still some room." Korber is expecting more visitors than last year and believes IMA '87 will attract 13,000 attendees.

Other show improvements include three times as many parking spaces available and shuttle bus service from the parking area to the exhibition hall. An enlarged amusement and vending machine museum on the grounds provides a break from the new game technology.

For more information on IMA, write Heckmann GmbH, Messen + Ausstellungen, Press Office, Kapellenstrabe 47, D-6200 Wiesbaden, West Germany.

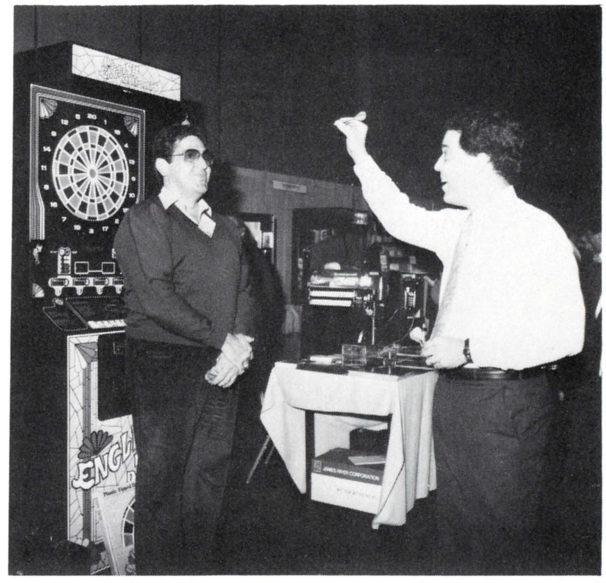
MCMOA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Members of the Michigan Coin Machine Operators Association (MCMOA) enjoyed their fourth annual convention in late September, as reported in the October 15 issue of *Play Meter* (pages 14 and 15).

These late arriving photos tell more of the story.

Walt Maner, right, MCMOA executive director, presents the Coin Machine Operator of the Year Award to Joe Cooke of Flint Vending, left, and the Pride Award to Dee Cooke.

Antique cigarette, popcorn, and gum machines were displayed by MCMOA president Joe Cooke.



Tom Koosis, left. of H.A.V., Inc., Detroit, provides a target for Cleveland Coin representative. For those frustrated operators, substitute a face of your choice!

Cartel Distributing Co. personnel at their booth.

Chuck Williams, left, of Cigarette Service Co., presents golf tournament trophy to Bill Smith of R.J. Reynolds.

MCMOA board of directors, back row, left to right: Mike Leonard, Kirk McKennon, Ed Schultz, Pat Cleary, Joe Cooke, Terry Meier, and Walt Maner. Front row left to right: Scott Bright, Tom Stewart, Fred Hunt, Mike Benson, and Chuck Williams.

OPEN HOUSES

Following the upbeat atmosphere at the AMOA Expo, distributors all around the country have been hosting open houses to bring the newest advances in equipment to the attention of their operator-customers. Many were not able to attend the Expo and look forward to "hands-on" game experience. Even those who did attend often want a second look at new product they liked on the exhibition floor.

KANE AMUSEMENT WELCOMES 200 GUESTS

Kane Amusement Co. of Hattiesburg, Miss. showed 200 guests what southern hospitality is all about at its second annual open house on November 22.

Operators enjoyed seeing new equipment shown earlier at the AMOA show in Chicago, including Nichibutsu's *UFO Robo Dangar*, which looks destined to become one of this year's top games; the *Kramer Krane*, complete with gumball feature; *Showcase Crane*; *Life Force* from Konami, a strong kit; Seeburg's *LaserMusic* system; *Sky Kid* from Sun Corp., designed for the VS system; Grayhound's *Skill Crane* and poker games; and Status's *Clash Road*, highly praised here and at AMOA. Other exhibited games were: Williams' *Road Kings*; Taito's *N.Y. Captor*, a two- piece shooting game; *Speed Rumbler*; Capcom's first video; Romstar's *Bubble Bobble*, coming on strong; *Play Choice-10*, Nintendo's unique ten-games-in-one-cabinet, plus *VS. Slalom*, complete with real skis; Kel-Chad's renamed *Shove Penny* V-shaped shuffleboard; Tecmo's hit video *Rygar*; Smart Industries' *Clean Sweep* crane; and Valley's pool table.

Wurlitzer's *One More Time* nostalgia jukebox, a revision of its 1015, was the star of the show. Programmed to play some old favorites, popular when the original 1015 was out, the style and sounds brought back fond memories. Jerry Reeves of Wurlitzer was there to answer questions.

Kane welcomed other manufacturer representatives Ron Siller of

Mike Horan of Kramer, center, shows an operator the gumball feature on the *Kramer Krane* as Larry Macaluso of Kane looks on.

Cathy Kane looks at name drawn by route man Bill Horoszko for one of the many door prizes.

Marisa Kane announces Larry Hood as winner of a VCR donated by Konami.

Dennis the Menace (alias Ron Siller) of Nichibutsu, right, chats with Rich Robbins of Sun Corp.

Nichibutsu; Rich Robbins of Sun Corp.; Mike Horan of Kramer; Dan Dinnebeil (who was scheduled to be married the next week-congratulations to him) of Grayhound; Ralph Paukner of Status; and Bob Turpin of Wico.

While guests were enjoying a southern buffet, the Kane staff was busy trying to keep up with the orders for equipment. George Kane, slightly worn out from greeting guests and writing orders, said, "We were hoping for a good turnout, but this was even better than we anticipated."

The company has been adding to the list of manufacturers it represents. They include American Shuffleboard, Arachnid, Betson, Smart Industry cranes, Cinematronics, Exidy, Wurlitzer, Grayhound, Kel-Chad, Konami, Kramer, Memetron, Merit, Nichibutsu, Romstar, Sun, Taito, Tecmo, Tradewest, Williams, Capcom, Seeburg, and Valley.

Kane has the formula for success and they are making it work with a fine staff.

A large crowd gathers for Kane's annual open house.

Left to right: Jerry Reeves of Wurlitzer, Shirley Huffine, Mack and Al Huffine.

Grayhound's Dan Dinnebeil, left, and Marisa Kane congratulate Grayhound kit winner Al Huffine.

George Kane, right, with Dan Dinniebel of Grayhound,Danny Corvan(left) and Paul Tallarico(in hat) of Corvan Amusements.

Left to right: George Kane, daughter Karen, wife Marisa, son George and his wife Cathy.

Bob Turpin, left, and Rich Robbins with Kane's Christine Landon.

Marisa Kane, right, with color TV winners Bill and Dot Trussell of Trussell Amusement Co..

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Weaver of D&W Amusement, Jackson, Miss.

OPEN HOUSES

STATE SALES

Operators gather for door prize drawings at the State Sales open house on November 23.

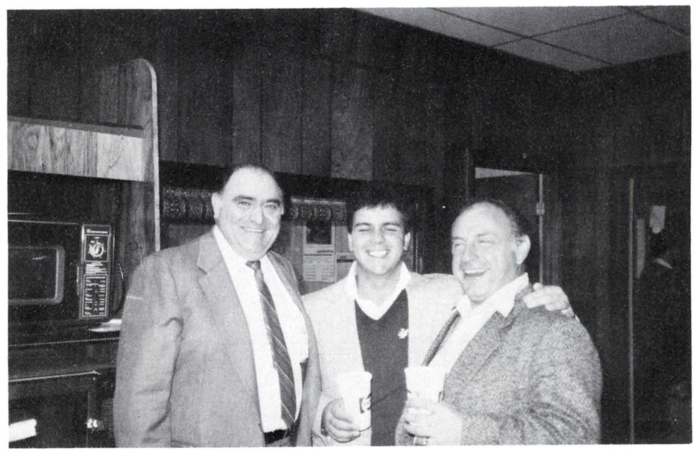
Kim Koenigsberg of State Sales, left, and Jeff Walker of Premier are surrounded by new equipment.

Steve Koenigsberg of Stat Sales, left, greets Mr. and Mrs. Steve Kile of Century Music in Petersburg, West Va.

ROWE INTERNATIONAL

Over 200 attendees enjoyed the Rowe International open house on November 16. Left to right are: Mike Publicover of Rowe, Bert Poulon, and Joe Gilbert.

On the Rowe showroom floor Bill Cravens of Capcom, left, chats with Bob LeBlanc of Rowe, center, and Neil Rubin of Canada.



Other Rowe attendees were, left to right: Dom Caruso of Rowe, Frank Costa of Fascination Ltd.in Boston, and Carl DeCotis of Town Line Ten Pin.

SOCCER YOUR MONEY AND REACH YOUR GOAL WITH A GAME THAT'S A HEADER ABOVE THE REST.

KICK AND RUN™

CABINET DIMENSIONS:
HEIGHT: 72" (182.9 cm)
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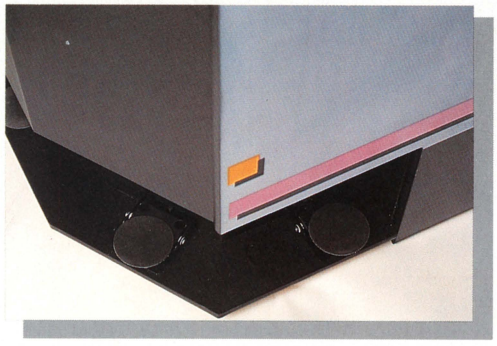
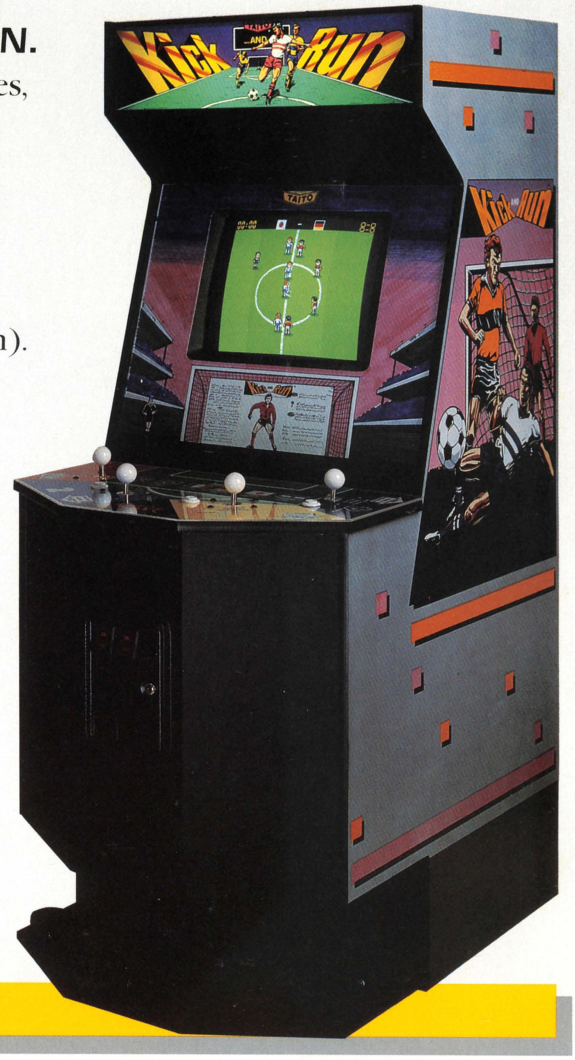
DEPTH: 40" (101.6 cm)

A NEW, UNIQUE DEDICATED GAME FROM TAITO AMERICA CORPORATION.

A high-tech game with realistic play features, challenging your way through the international tournaments by making the best use of the characteristics of each team and using the skills of team play as well as individual play. Up to 4 players can compete against the computer or team against team (up to 2 people on each team).



In addition to JOYSTICK and BUTTON, TAITO AMERICA has added a unique new FOOT PEDAL to give the player more realistic action.



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Each of the international teams has unique playing strengths and "kick and run" lets you choose teams from the U.S.A., JAPAN, BRAZIL, ITALY, WEST GERMANY, ENGLAND and ARGENTINA.

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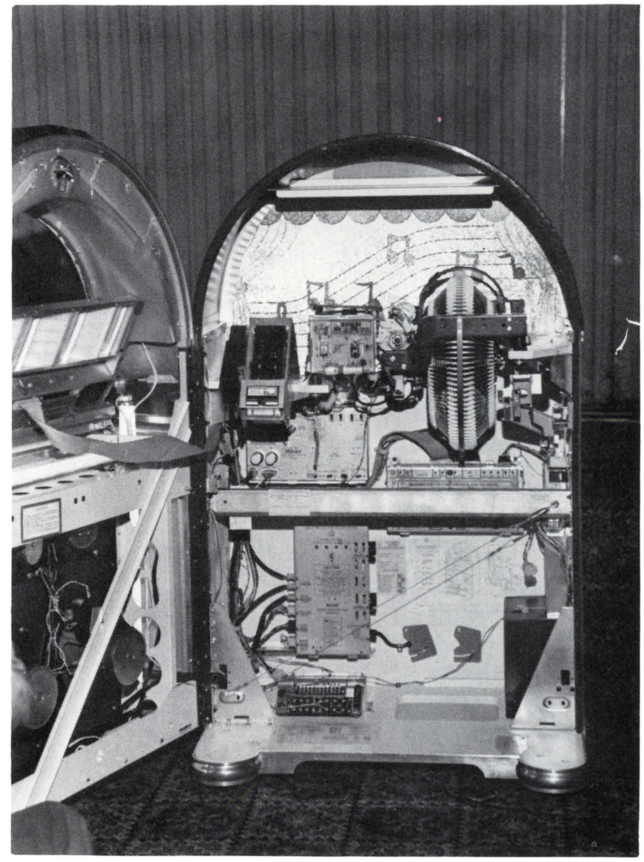
OPEN HOUSES

LATE ARRIVING PHOTOS

Jerry Marcus of Atlas and Rock-Ola executive vice president Bette Lockhart with *Nostalgia* model at Zum Deutschen Eck in Chicago where Atlas displayed the new jukebox. (see November 15 issue news story).



While operators admire the exterior of jukeboxes, technicians can appreciate the interior mechanisms that create the wonderful sounds.

On hand for Rock-Ola's area unveiling of *Nostalgia* are, left to right: Atlas president Jerry Marcus, Rock-Ola's's Shuja Haque and Bob Hesch, and operators Kem Thom and Don Hesch.

James Cuccio of Chess Amusements in Lodi, N.J., left, congratulates Allan Waldor of ABC Distributing of Hillside, N.J. on his second term as president of the Amusement & Music Operators Association of New Jersey (AMOANJ). (see November 15 issue news story).

OPEN HOUSES

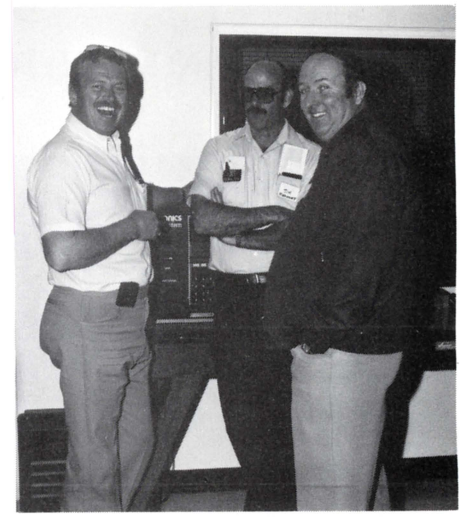
MOUNTAIN COIN OF DENVER

Sixty door prizes totaling over $15,000 were given away at the Mountain Coin of Denver open house on November 20. The largest prize was a nine-foot shuffleboard won by Ace Games.

The showroom floor held 202 attendees who enjoyed a luncheon buffet of chicken, ribs, sausages, vegetable platters, and later, an open bar.

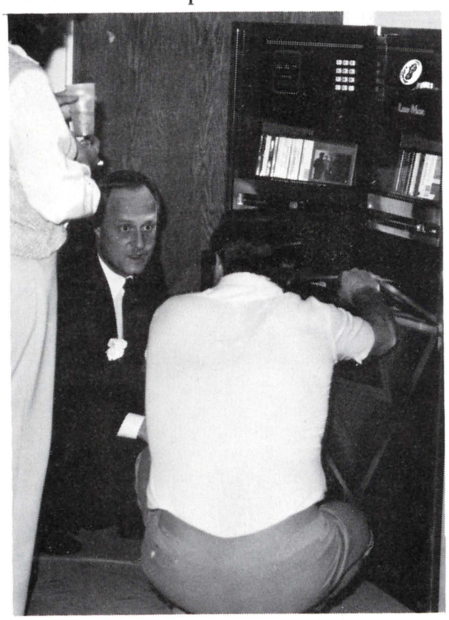
Among the manufacturer representatives present were Mark Struhs of Dynamo, Steve Palmer of A.P., John Barone of Data East, Bob Hodges of Arachnid, Jay Wood of Ardac, Dick Konopa of Bally, Tony Fedrico of CoinCo, Dan Fuller of Merit, Brian Duke and Mike Minor of Nintendo, Adolph Seitz, Jr. of Premier, Tom Siemieniec of Seeburg, John Taylor of Vendo, Lenore Sayers of Sega, Earl Charlton of Whittenborg, Ron Siller of Nichibutsu, and Aldo Donnaloia of Capcom.

Eldon Kingston, president of Mountain Coin, left, and Jack Brown, division manager, greeted operators.



Mountain Coin of Denver attendees included, left to right: Ron Stewart, Mike Hunt, and Jim Mahoney.

Women enjoyed playing Exidy's *Clay Pigeon.*



Tom Siemieniec of Seeburg, center, extols the virtues of the *Laser Music* CD system.

Brian Duke of Nintendo and Kris Felthager try a game on the VS. UniSystem.

Standing in front of a bank of successful games are, left to right: Steve Hartley, Mark Robbins, John Rowe, and Mark Struhs.

AUDIO VISUAL AMUSEMENTS

Over 150 operators and manufacturer representatives attended the Audio Visual Amusements open house on December 4 in St. Louis.

Two seminars were included in the day's exhibition of new equipment. Tom Cahill, service manager for Williams Electronics, conducted one session; Rick McManus of technical services for Nintendo of America conducted the other. Those demonstrating new equipment were Bill Cravens of Capcom, Ken Anderson of Cinematronics, John Barone of Data East, Mark Struhs of Dynamo, Steve Kaufman and Frank Pellegrini of Konami, Frank Ballouz, Mike Minor, and Rick McManus of Nintendo, Joe Pankus and Tom Siemieniec of Seeburg, Bob Harzer of SMS, Rich Robbins of Sun Corp., Yoshi Suzuki and Rick Rochetti of Taito, and Marty Glazman and Tom Cahill of Williams.

Door prizes included a 25-inch console color TV won by Green Games. Other prizes included a 19-inch color TV, VCR's, microwave ovens, telephones, and compact-disc radios. All prizes were donated by either AVA or manufacturers.

AVA attendees included, left to right: Rich Robbins of Sun. Corp., Frank Pellegrini of Konami, Marty Glazman of Williams, and Bill Cravens of Capcom.

Operators and manufacturer representatives enjoyed a lavish buffet while viewing new equipment.

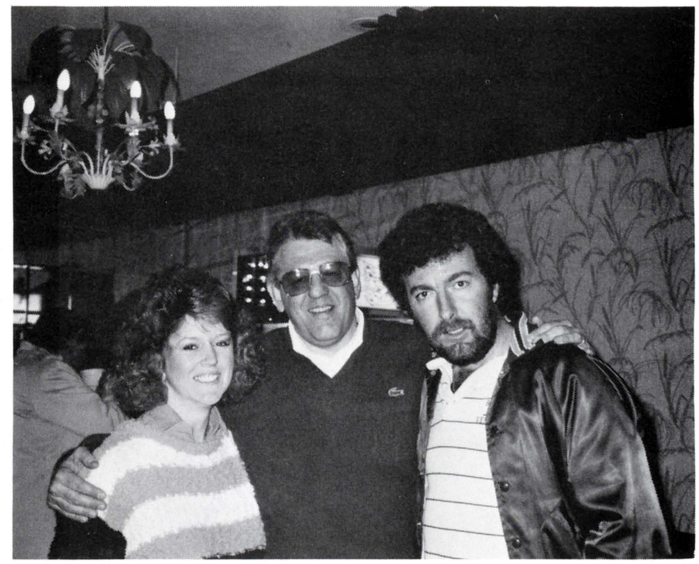
Pete Entringer, president of AVA, left, talks with Tom Siemieniec, center, and Joe Pankus of Seeburg.

Two technical seminars were well attended at the AVA open house. Tom Cahill of Williams and Rick McManus of Nintendo each conducted a session.

OPEN HOUSES

T.O.P. DISTRIBUTING

Gathering in the service department are, left to right: Peggy Hanna, Kathy Tarantelli, Joe Gilbert, John Bilotta, and Pat Tarantelli.



Ginger Wittmeyer of Beck's Vending, joins Tom Tarantelli, center, and Bob Beck of Beck's Vending.

Captured on the showroom floor are, left to right: John Hill of Sega, Ralph Paukner of Status, Jan Wahby of Bally, Bill Cravens of Capcom, Joe Gilbert of Nintendo, and John Margold of Cinematronics.

A crowd scene from the T.O.P. Buffalo office open house on November 18. T.O.P. Also had open houses at its Rochester, Syracuse, and Albany offices in November.

WARNING

These products are illegal:

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- **CNS 3 games in 1**
- **Tri-Video Game System**

Some of Nintendo of America Inc.'s distributors have recently received correspondence from companies in the Far East offering to sell hardware to convert Nintendo Co., Ltd. home video game cartridges for play in a coin-operated video game system. Units are being offered under names such as "3-in-1 Game System," "CNS 3 games in 1," and "Tri-Video Game System."

The "public performance" in a coin-operated video game of Nintendo home video game cartridges is illegal and a violation of U.S. Copyright Law. 17 U.S.C. Section 106(4) and 17 U.S.C. 501.

Nintendo has never authorized anyone to "publicly perform" its home video game software or to convert its home video game cartridges for play in a coin-operated video game system.

Nintendo of America Inc. will immediately commence legal action against *any person* who imports, sells or operates a coin-operated video game system which uses and "publicly performs" Nintendo's home video game software. Nintendo will also seek criminal prosecution of such persons for violation of U.S. Law. 17 U.S.C. 506.

Persons having any information or questions about such hardware systems are asked to contact Mr. Frank Ballouz or Ms. Linda Weber of Nintendo of America Inc. at 1-800-633-3236.

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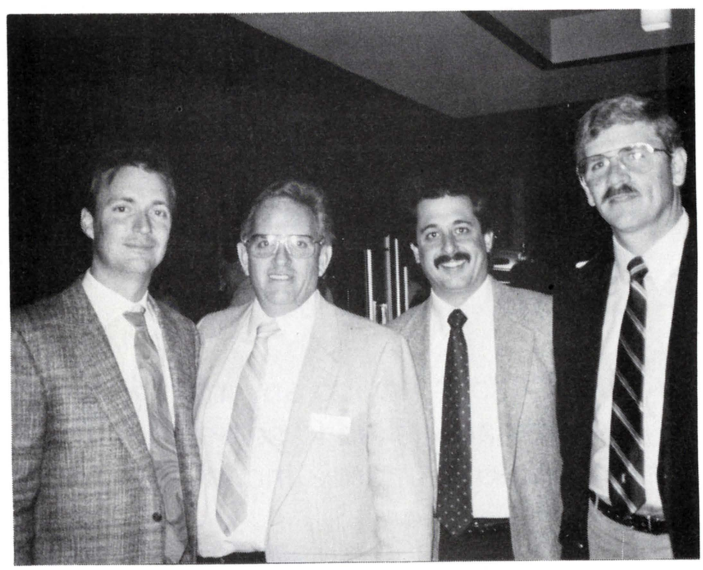
OPEN HOUSES

ACTIVE DISTRIBUTING

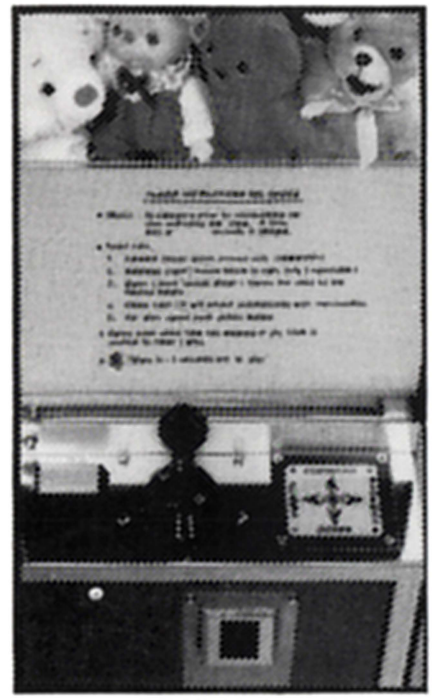
Among the crowd of 200 attending the Active Distributing November 22 open house are, left to right: Ben Rochetti of Taito, Rene Lopez of Romstar, Joe Gilbert of Nintendo, Mark Struhs of Dynamo, and John Hill of Sega.

Harry Kimbel of K&K Amusement, left, joins David Gilfor of Active, center, and Joe Gilbert of Nintendo.

Active's showroom floor was the scene of new equipment exhibits and a buffet table of food and refreshments.



Discussing new games are, left to right: Paul Russell of Active, Joe Gilbert of Nintendo, Richard Long of Time-Out Family Amusement and Tom McAuliffe of Time-Out.



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How Can Industry Standardization Help Me?

Standardization — or uniformity — of parts and components helps both manufacturers and operators reach a higher level of efficiency, productivity and profitability. It streamlines — some say simplify — parts and components used in the manufacturing process as well as repairs and machine modifications made by operators. In some cases, industry standardization can reduce parts and component inventories because all manufacturers meet the same specifications.

What Is AMOA Doing About Industry Standardization?

The Amusement & Music Operators Association's (AMOA) industry standardization committee has proposed and urges manufacturers to adopt a set of recommended standards for coin door locks, cash door locks, power switches, volume controls, foreign coins and pinball bookkeeping. The committee also welcomes additional suggestions from both manufacturers and operators to be considered for standardization recommendations.

AMOA: Working for You!

For more information on industry standardization — or AMOA membership, programs and services — call or write today!

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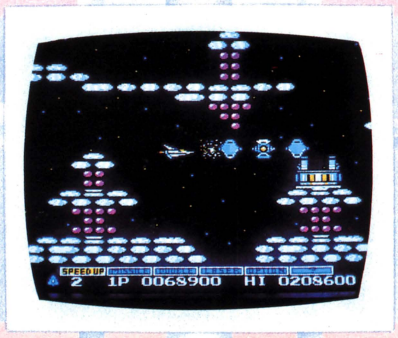

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Industry Upturn Continues in '86

"I don't think you start rebuilding a city after a war until the war is over with. So that is what happened a year ago," said Bob Lundquist in a Coinman Interview at the end of 1986.

He summed up the feelings of the past year as the industry started rebuilding after the war of the video boom. When 1985 ended, there was guarded optimism as to the industry's fate. Operators were cautiously stating that things were looking brighter, equipment seemed better than it had been, and businesses that had survived thus far seemed fairly certain to remain stable.

And so the attitude going into 1986 was high. When asked his view of the AMOA, a common indicator of the state of the industry, Nolan Bushnell replied, "The sparkle is back." That statement coming from the father of video, reassures us that the industry is going to be OK. Changes hoped for in 1985 are beginning to materialize, crane and merchandiser collections soared, and there was a much greater comradery among the operator, distributor, and manufacturer population. In interviews with Maury Ferchen, president of Bally and the manufacturers association, AAMA, and Al Marsh, outgoing president of the operators association, AMOA, both stressed the need for better communication. "If we share our concerns and needs in the industry, we will see a much stronger industry," Ferchen said.

Cranes and merchandisers were one of the top stories of 1986.

"One of the goals I set for myself when taking over this position was to establish better communication within the industry," said Marsh. "The true professional level we need requires solid communication and a clear understanding of each segment and its role in the industry."

AAMA battles parallel imports and copies

The AAMA, having regrouped in 1985, stepped up its efforts to thwart copiers.

AAMA's Japanese counterpart, the Japanese Amusement Machine Manufacturers Association (JAMMA) became involved when it met with AAMA in late '85 to discuss the urgency of stopping the flow of copied games from South Korea. JAMMA stated that "...The Japanese government has extended economic aid to Korea, but should not allow it to continue under the circumstances."

South Korea, meantime, said it was initiating comprehensive copyright legislation. AAMA called the move "particularly important because it is the first step forward in establishing

Sega's *Out Run* drew a crowd at AMOA.

copyright and trademark laws in Korea..."

While manufacturers were confident in seeing relief from copiers, parallel imports were proving to be a problem of equal intensity. While not copies in the same sense, parallel imports are games manufactured legally overseas and then resold to U.S. importers, other than the companies assigned U.S. distribution rights by the manufacturer.

AAMA issued a position paper stating, "Parallel importers and their customers infringe on copyrights and in doing so incur civil and criminal liability." A Washington, D.C. attorney who had advised parallel importers disagreed, saying in a letter to AAMA, "The legal issues of parallel imports remains unresolved and the AAMA statement should be considered only the advocacy of an opponent of parallel imports."

AAMA again approached the JAMMA with a request to require Japanese software manufacturers to program boards intended for Japanese use only with the words "This game illegal for use in the USA" that would appear on the video screen.

AMOA vowed its support of AAMA in its efforts against parallel importers and issued a position paper to its members. In a statement after AMOA's April board meeting, president Al Marsh said, "We recognize AAMA's problems, although we can't police per se. However, our position paper will serve to inform the operators of the field of problems of buying copied or parallel games. Our main purpose is to create a better industry."

Bob Lloyd, then president of AAMA said of AMOA's support, "The AMOA stand is one step in combating the problem and should have an effect on the honest operator....But the war is still there. Every operator, distributor and manufacturer has to pull together to fight the problem."

AAMA hired FBI agent Bob Fay as its director of industry affairs and enforcement and in late 1986 hired four more ex-FBI agents to bolster AAMA's attack against counterfeit and parallel video games.

AMOA faces industry issues

While supporting AAMA on the parallel/copy game problem, AMOA was facing issues of its own and initiating some beneficial programs.

The AMOA was tackling the issue of the Berne convention and trying to inform members of the devastation

that could occur should the U.S. join the group. According to AMOA, as a prerequisite to joining, domestic law would have to be made compatible with the convention, and that would require elimination of the compulsory jukebox license. However, AMOA stressed that should that happen and the U.S. joins the century-old international agreement that governs the treatment of copyrighted material, the move would be devastating to jukebox operators already feeling the strains in their pockets from a compulsory license fee. "Operators would be wide open to legal actions for copyright infringement and the performing rights societies would have a better chance to collect more money from operators."

While operators were being persuaded to write their congressmen protesting the Berne Convention, the jukebox license fee was scheduled to be raised to $63 on January 1, 1987. When the agreement was reached last year between AMOA and the performing rights societies, the compulsory license fee would have been only $60 provided 110,000 jukeboxes were licensed; the number fell short. AMOA then announced a program to encourage licensing under which jukebox operators, distributors, or manufacturers could report unlicensed jukeboxes to the copyright office. A license application form would be sent to the culprit; if he didn't respond, the information would be turned over for legal action.

In an effort to strengthen the cooperation between the manufacturers and operators, a committee was formed by AMOA to work on a standardization program, a subject addressed by operator Todd Erickson of Minnesota. Operators have long wondered why certain parts on games, such as locks and power switches, cannot be standardized. Manufacturers have agreed.

AMOA organized a dart tournament run by Kirk McKennon. Its goals were to expand income opportunities for AMOA members and their dart

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machine locations.

The first tournament, held in May, drew 39 AMOA members sponsoring 106 four-man teams. Dick Hawkins, AMOA vice president, said, "The tournament was a success for everyone."

AMOA had its first AMOA Government Affairs Conference in which 120 operators, leaders of AAMA, and leaders of AMOA went to Washington to meet with representatives. Said one senator to the group, "You can be sure if you don't work closely with your government legislators, they will most assuredly dig deep down into your pockets."

John Estridge, AMOA's chairman of government relations said, "Our main objective was to establish contacts and learn our way around."

Cigarette operator members also called upon AMOA when the American Medical Association proposed a ban on cigarette advertising and the sale of cigarettes through vending machines. In a strongly worded rebuttal, AMOA stated, "It's unfair and naive. It would cause financial grief to people who own and supply cigarette vending machines."

AMOA announced plans to join forces with the National Coin Machine Institute (finalized in November), an organization formed several years ago by a group of large operators, many of whom operated large cigarette vending routes. In rebutting AMA's proposal, AMOA urged members to follow an action plan implemented by NCMI against the AMA.

The National Automatic Merchandising Association, NAMA, sent a rebuttal letter informing the AMA that its assumptions, the basis for its proposal, were not based on fact. The group pointed out, among other things, that 97 percent of teenage smokers do not buy cigarettes from vending machines, contrary to AMA's beliefs.

AMOA also introduced its Member Assistance Program and the State Association Data Bank to increase the exchange of information in the industry. Chairman Gene Urso said, "The creation of these programs is a valuable member benefit that utilizes the wealth of expertise within AMOA's ranks."

Seeburg introduced the first compact disc jukebox, shown here with vice president Nick Hindman (left) and president Ed Blankenbeckler.

At the AAMA reception during AMOA's trip to Washington are (from left) Data East's Bob Lloyd, Congressman Bill Green (R-N.Y.), AAMA's David Weaver, and AMOA president Al Marsh

Equipment

Atari and Sega began a snowball of dedicated equipment with *Gauntlet* and *Hang-On*, Williams

PLAY METER ASKS:

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY?

"

Improving dramatically! Need of industrywide standards is important.

MICHIGAN

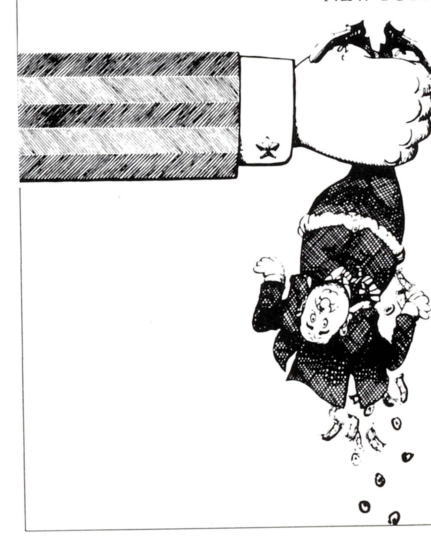
It is in pretty good shape. Basicallywhereitwas about 6 to 10 years ago. Don't forget we don't operate pinsormusicortablesany longer, only videos. It appears very stable from our outlook.

NEW YORK

Shakeout mostly over. Stabilizing. Big getting bigger!

"

NEW YORK



solidified interest in pinball with High Speed, Seeburg introduced the first compact disc phonograph, and dart interest continued. But there is little doubt that 1986 will go down in coin machine history as the year of the crane.

Merchandisers and cranes dominated the ACME show in early 1986, and did it again at AMOA in November. Over 24 companies exhibited merchandisers, and an array of support companies selling the goodies to stock them with took the bulk of interest. In Play Meter's State of the Industry Survey in November, 18 percent of the operators reported collections above $300 per week.

Williams' *High Speed* created a boom in pinball.*

Operators, pleased with finding a piece of equipment that was a sure-fire money maker, tended to dismiss the questions of legality. Bob Snyder, a California-based consultant on coin-operated redemption equipment, among other things, said, "The primary consideration of operators, distributors and manufacturers of merchandisers and redemption equipment must be the legal issues involved and an assessment of skill and chance."

Cities, states, and counties, suddenly faced with a phenomenon with a potential impact similar to video games, were not taking the machines lightly. Law enforcement agencies began seizing games or issued orders that they be removed based on the assumption that a criminal statute has been violated since virtually all states prohibit the use of slot machines. Said Snyder, "A game doesn't have to have an arm to pull and spinning wheels for the law to classify it as a slot machine. Cranes with joysticks are not automatically OK."

And as 1986 comes to an end, many in the industry are still taking a wait-and-see attitude as those who are reaping the profits of cranes and merchandisers are holding their breath awaiting real answers as the legality of the equipment is debated at all levels of government.

Pinball got another shot in the arm from Williams' *High Speed.* Collections on pins rivaled videos once again, and operators claimed their pins were doing very well.

Atari introduced *Gauntlet,* a dedicated video game that allows four players to play simultaneously, amid grumbles from operators that it wasn't a kit for one of the systems. It became clear, however, that the game's original cabinet design made it unique, though expensive. Operators soon reported high earnings and it was a hit. Operators, in a better financial position, didn't seem to mind spending the money for something so unusual. Sega also was enjoying tremendous success with *Hang-On,* an

PLAY METER ASKS:

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY?

"

The current industry is at a level where there is room for growth and expansion which will not crowd thy neighbor. Through this growth, game earnings should continue to increase 5-10% annually, giving our present situation a good future outlook as long as game design continues strong.

"

CALIFORNIA

expensive but unique arcade piece designed like a motorcycle with the player sitting astride to play the game.

Other factories picked up on this deviation from the norm and they, too, soon were offering similar types of games. Operators at the AMOA show noted the fewer number of kits and the increased array of dedicated pieces.

In an article on the Japanese show, held just weeks before AMOA, David Snook observed that the reason for the concentration of dedicated games was an attempt to discourage copies. The two hits of that show were Sega's *Out Run* and Konami's *WEC LeMans,* two arcade pieces utilizing car cabinets for realistic play. But, as is all too often the case, the games with the original concepts were the ones that were successful, they were the ones that were unique. Operators noted price tags as much as the game.

1986 saw multiple models of popular games, among them *Gauntlet* (also *Gauntlet II* and a two-player version); *Super Sprint* (and *Championship Sprint*); three sizes for *Hang-On,* and *Space Harrier,* and *Out Run* plus two for *Enduro Racer;* an upright and sit-down of *Speed Buggy;* and three models of *WEC LeMans.*

Manufacturers may be trying to ease the pain of purchasing these more expensive games by making variations that appeal to a larger audience of operators with differing wallet sizes.

Darts continued to win players, but it was clear that operators would have to run leagues to be successful. Darts without leagues have a half life, stated Tammi Norberg-Paulson of C & N Sales, Mankato, Minnesota, in an AMOA dart league seminar.

Valley joined the ranks of dart manufacturers with the introduction of two new games. Arachnid won its patent infringement suit against IDEA, which filed under Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy code and later sold its assets to Valley. Valley retained the entire IDEA staff and manufacturers its games at IDEA's former Sycamore, Illinois facility. Merit purchased the assets of Nomac and kept all Nomac personnel and facilities. Merit assembled a national team of league and promotion specialists headed by Kirk McKennon and Howard Smoyer.

Byron Cook (left) with *Ikari Warriors,* a hit from his (and John Rowe's) newly formed company, Tradewest.

Seeburg introduced the first compact disc phonograph during the summer and dominated that market until Rowe announced its combination record/compact disc phonograph at its annual distributor meeting shortly before AMOA. Rowe's unit allows operators to use compact discs and 45 records in the same cabinet whereas Seeburg's unit is strictly compact discs.

And while most jukebox manufacturers are making quantum leaps to the new compact disc technology, Rowe, Rock-Ola and Wurlitzer took a look back and introduced nostalgia phonos-Wurlitzer's *One More Time,* a remake of its 1015 popular in the 50s; Rowe at the AMOA showed an antique-creation jukebox that will be available in January; and Rock-Ola introduced its *Nostalgia* combining the vintage exterior of classic jukeboxes with 1980s interior electronics.

Interest in private pay phones waned slightly as operators considered this new form of income. "Contributing to the confusion about operating pay phones is that one individual's experience is not usually helpful to another. There are different laws governing the operation of private pay phones in each of the 38 states in which operating pay phones by someone other than Bell has been approved...," said an article by Mike Shaw.

Distribution changes

One of the biggest announcements came in March when Bally announced it was leaving the distributing business. President Maury Ferchen said, "There are plenty of strong independent distributors that do a great job....I think everyone understands our situation and that we are trying to do what is best."

Bally had gotten into distributing during the video boom and had accumulated some of the biggest

names in distributing, including Banner, Empire, and Advance Automatic. It peaked with eleven offices over the country, ending its distribution expansion with the acquisition of Banner in 1984.

Independent distributors seized the opportunity to expand. David Gilfor's and Paul Russell's Active Amusements bought Bally Banner in Philadelphia. Said Gilfor, "With the purchase we will take a company strong in vending (Bally) and one strong in music and games and merge them into one, giving our customers the best of both."

That philosophy of expanding into vending by purchasing Bally offices was also behind State Sales' acquisition of Bally Banner Baltimore and C.A. Robinson's purchase of Bally San Francisco. American Vending of Wood Dale, Illinois, a company already strong in vending bought Bally's Chicago office to boost its position in music and games.

Private pay phone interest continued, though not with the intensity of the previous year.

Employees of Bally Banner Pittsburgh bought that office collectively; and Rick Kirby and a group of investors, including Betson, bought Bally's Massachusetts branch and renamed it New England Coin-Op under the direction of Kirby.

In other distributing moves, Atlas Distributing (Chicago) added a Michigan branch; Kane Amusement (Mississippi) moved to larger facilities; Cleveland Coin (Ohio) opened an office in Michigan; Mondial (New Jersey) added an office in Long Island and acquired Albert Simon Inc.; Brady Distributing (North Carolina) opened an office in Tennessee; Sunshine Distributing (Kansas City) opened a branch office in St. Louis; T.O.P. Distributing (Rochester, N.Y.) opened an office in Syracuse, N.Y.; Birmingham Vending (Alabama) planned to open an office in Florida; 50th State Coin-Op opened in Hawaii; Moss Distributing opened in Des Moines; and Peach State Distributing (Atlanta) reorganized after having filed Chapter 11.

Manufacturing changes

Digital Controls, the Atlanta company that soared to success with *Little Casino,* filed bankruptcy and the company was shut down. The principals, Mike Macke and Mike Pace, went separate ways, each forming his own company. Macke's new Game Masters introduced a rotary merchandiser and Pace announced that his U.S. Games will market and develop video and non-video games. Nichibutsu opened an office in Portland; IDEA, manufacturer of electronic dart games, lost a years-long lawsuit filed by Arachnid and filed bankruptcy, then sold Valley the assets; Konami moved into new facilities; Showcase Inc. expanded its production facilities; an Australian company Bolwell Flight Simulators and American Corporate Directions formed a joint venture called Ride Dynamics and brought a new line of flight simulator kiddie rides to the U.S.;

Japanese Sun Corporation bought KitKorp; U.S. Billiards changed its name to Imagination Leisure; Nichibutsu opened an office in Portland; Seeburg opened a one stop business to distribute compact discs; Nintendo negotiated with several companies to develop software for its VS system; and Japanese Capcom and SNK opened U.S. offices.

And in a surprising twist, Williams, who had been focusing exclusively on pinballs, announced its reentry into the video market and Data East, manufacturer of video games hired pin expert Gary Stern and announced its decision to develop and manufacture pins.

Dynamo, famous for its pool tables and table soccer, developed *Dynamo Hockey*, a coin operated air cushion hockey table. Dynamo also was contracted to build games for a variety of manufacturers including Sega, Data East, and Tradewest, and developed a line of cabinets for kits that "were too good to put in run down cabinets."

Another casualty of the shakeout came when Universal announced it was pulling out of the video game business. The company had the first truly successful conversion kit, *Mr. Do!*

Operator/distributor Byron Cook and John Rowe, previously with SNK, formed a new company called Tradewest and made a deal with Japanese SNK to license video games. It's *Ikari Warriors* was one of the top games of the year. The company showed a new game, *Victory Road* at AMOA that operators said may be as popular.

Another group of operators started Komax and introduced its first kit called *Flower*. Lazer Maze International was formed to franchise *Lazer Maze*, a player-interactive walk-through video fantasy developed by High Technology Recreation Industries, Inc. of Canada. The first franchise opened in Los Angeles in December.

State of the industry

Though Play Meter's annual State of the Industry report showed that industry gross collections had dipped to $4 billion from $4.5 billion the previous year, there were nearly 1,500 fewer operators to share in the profits. But surprisingly, there was an 8.5 percent increase in equipment purchases. Operators reported collections on all types of equipment fairly consistent with last year's collections with pool tables, kiddie rides, and phonographs rising slightly and electronic darts down. Cranes and merchandisers showed the highest collections with 40 percent of operators reporting collections between $75 and $300 per week.

CALENDAR

JANUARY
5 6 7

Nightclub & Bar Expo, Bally's Grand Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev. Sponsored by Night Club & Bar Magazine and other industry co-sponsors. For more information, contact Night Club & Bar Magazine, 305 W. Jackson Ave., Oxford, MS 38655, (601) 236-5510

30 **FEBRUARY** 1

South Carolina Coin Operators Association (SCCOA) Annual Convention and Trade Show, Raddison Hotel, Columbia, SC. Contact Helen Sikes at (803) 254-4444, or write SCCOA at 3270 Bagnal Dr., Columbia, SC 29204.

5 6 7 8

Florida Amusement/Vending Association (FAVA) Vending Show, Holiday Inn, Orlando, Fla. Contact FAVA, P.O. Box 13089, Tallahassee, FL 32308, (904) 878-3134.

MARCH
20 21 22

American Coin Machine Exhibition (ACME), Rivergate Center, New Orleans. For information and exhibition space contact William T. Glasgow, Inc., 16066 S. Park Ave., South Holland, IL 60473, (312) 333-9292.

APRIL
3 4 5

New York State Coin Machine Association (NYSCMA) Trade Show, Turf Inn, Albany, N.Y. Contact Ann Kelley or Curt Matterson at NYSCMA headquarters, c/o Matterson Associates, 427 Kenwood Ave., Delmar, NY 12054, (518) 439-0981.

23 24 25 26

Florida Amusement/Vending Association (FAVA) Music and Games Show, Omni International Hotel, Orlando, Fla. Contact FAVA, P.O. Box 13089, Tallahassee, FL 32308, (904) 878-3134.

MAY
1 2 3

Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Second Annual National Team Dart Tournament, Chicago. Contact John Fetters, AMOA Dart Association, 111 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, IL 60601, (312) 644-6610.

INTERNATIONAL SHOWS

JANUARY
19 20 21 22

ATEI, Olympia, London. Contact Amusement Trades Exhibitions, 122 Clapham Common North Side, London SW4 9SP. Telephone 01-228-4107.

29 30 31

IMA, Frankfurt, West Germany. Contact Heckmann GmbH, Kapellenstrasse 47, 6200 Wiesbaden, Germany. Telephone (06121) 52-40-71.

APRIL
6 7 8 9

The Arab International Toys, Games, and Amusements Trade Fair, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Contact World Trade Promotions, Ltd., 19-21 High St., Sutton, Surrey SM1 1NF England. Telephone 01-642-7688.

LET'S PARTY!

The second in a series of shooting games from Taito America.

CYCLE SHOOTING™

In the aftermath of a future-world gone mad, the player stands alone against mutant cycle gangs and their vicious leaders. Armed only with his high powered hand gun, he wanders through the deserted cities and towns, along once congested highways, and into the open desert. Everywhere he goes he must face the attacks of his enemies. They are deadly, so he must stay sharp and shoot straight if he is to survive.

The leaders of these marauding gangs include:

- A beserk mercenary, armed with a rocket launcher and a machine gun. To defeat him the player must shoot him a number of times.
- Three ruthless brothers, with their distinctive red mohawks, are skilled drivers and crack shots. The player confronts this terrible-trio in a ghost town, and into the desert. If they reach the log-bridge, a skillful shot will detonate the dynamite hidden on the bridge below.
- A woman warrior, dressed in form-fitting armor and armed with a machine gun. Her armor and shield protect her well, so she must be shot several times. Each shot removes a piece of her armor until her entire suit is gone. Only then is she vulnerable to one last shot to destroy her!
- In addition to the enemies, the player must destroy flying targets before they reach the ground.

The first in the series of innovative two-piece gun games was New York Captor!™ Now Cycle Shooting™ brings you more of the on-target appeal you have come to expect from TAITO AMERICA CORPORATION.

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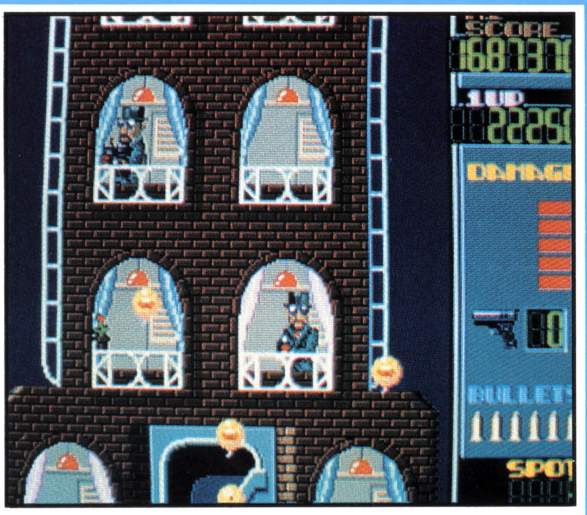

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More than a quality upright.

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Clever graphics, stereo sound and an innovative 2-piece cabinet no wider than a standard upright all make N.Y. CAPTOR a game to set your sights on!

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ASK THE OPERATOR

Q:

"What are the most significant things that have happened in your business in the past year?"

A: Jim Cole, Cole Vending Company, Weaverville, N.C.:

The most significant things have been the cranes that we've put on our route. We've been able to put cranes out with a better percentage than games, of course. And they've done extremely well for us.

Also, there have been some good games introduced this year. We went about three or four years without any real good games. We've done well with games like *Ikari Warriors* and *High Speed.*

We've had a couple of locations buy their own equipment this year....That hurt us but we've gained it all back in cranes.

It's been a very good year for us.

A: Rockie Repass, comptroller for John Newberry's Venco, Inc., in Bland, Va.:

Since March, probably the most significant impact has been from cranes. The merchandising and the amount of volume that we've done has taken a large percentage of our business this year.

[In] the new pinballs by Williams, more action in the pinball has created more stir there. Nothing specific in the video part of the industry has been outstanding. But we have seen the increase in the cranes and the pinballs.

A: Don Long, Don Long Enterprises, Wildwood Crest, N.J.:

The most significant thing that I can see over the past year is that they have come out with some decent conversion kits, and you can revitalize an older machine that has a good tube in it and a cabinet that's still decent-looking. You can put a decent game in there, and up your income considerably.

The only thing I see now coming[is]that now the kits are getting up there in price.[But the kit does]save a cash-flow problem. You [don't] have to spend all that money and hope a game does it. You [can]put out a portion of that money and hope it does it. It gives you more flexibility. The public seems to be [accepting]. They said the home games would cut the arcades down. In our area, we seem to be holding our own very well.

A: Phillip Elum, Elum Music Company, Massillon, Ohio:

If you equate significance to dollars, then in this business, I guess the only thing that has made any kind of an impact are the cranes. We just don't know how long they're going to last and where they're going to go. And maybe that's going to be part of our job and part of the job of the people who have manufactured and sold the product to us, to work together for some kind of a novelty item that's going to move out of those cranes. The plush is fine right now, but I see that as being a short-lived item.

1·9·8·6

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

NEWS & EVENTS

AMOA

Hesch Fund awards scholarship ..... 12/15/85,p.9.
Digital withdraws AMOA support ..... 12/31/85,p.8.
McKennon to organize AMOA dart program ..... 12/31/85,p.9.
AMOA answers Digital Controls ..... 2/86,p.8.
AMOA plans government conference ..... 3/1/86,p.9.
AMOA tournament applications due April 1 ..... 3/15/86,p.6.
AMOA criticizes medical association's proposal ..... 3/15/86,p.7.
AMOA,AAMA to co-operate on parallel,copy problems ..... 4/1/86,p.8.
AMOA Expo '86 planned ..... 5/1/86,p.8.
AMOA tournament draws 106 teams ..... 5/15/86,p.8.
AAMA president remarks on AMOA stand ..... 5/15/86,p.8.
AMOA forms dart association ..... 6/15/86,p.9.
AMOA recommends standards ..... 8/15/86,p.7.
AMOA expects no Berne action in '86 ..... 8/15/86,p.10.
AMOA offers data bank, assistance program ..... 9/15/86,p.6.
AMOA dart tournament dates set ..... 9/15/86,p.7.
AMOA to honor Adlum ..... 9/15/86,p.16.
Standardization panel making progress ..... 9/15/86,p.36.
AMOA fights jukebox license elimination ..... 10/86,p.8.
Hesch fund object of Expo raffle ..... 10/86,p.10.
AMOA '86 may mark year of the crane ..... 10/86,p.32.
Chicago's diversions await AMOA visitors ..... 10/86,p.54.
AMOA Interview: Al Marsh ..... 10/86,p.64.
Expo '86 coincides with era of optimism ..... 10/86,p.94.

OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

PAMMA warns operators to beware ..... 12/1/85,p.12.
NAMA produces promotional movie ..... 12/1/85,p.14.
Ohio pool-league update ..... 12/15/85,p.7.
NAMA voices opposition to ban ..... 12/15/85,p.8.
New Japanese operator association formed ..... 12/15/85,p.8.
New York association schedules trade show ..... 12/15/86,p.11.
ICMOA plans pool tournament ..... 12/15/85,p.12.
New York liquor board proposes ban ..... 12/31/85,p.8.
JAMMA protests Korean copies ..... 12/31/85,p.10.
OMAA sponsors marketing program ..... 12/31/85,p.12.
ICMOA plans tournament ..... 1/15/86,p.8.
AAMA executive director resigns ..... 2/86,p.9.
PAMMA urges video poker legalization ..... 3/15/86,p.6.
AAMA names Braswell replacement ..... 4/1/86,p.10.
NAMA completes study of cigarette machines ..... 4/1/86,p.12.
AAMA names legal director ..... 4/1/86,p.12.
AAMA to exhibit at bowling trade show ..... 4/15/86,p.9.
A ICMOA ICMOA sponsors tournament ..... 5/1/86,p.9.
NYSCMA holds first show ..... 5/1/86,p.14.
PAMMA convention scheduled ..... 5/1/86,p.15.
CCMA, WAMO plan conventions ..... 5/1/86,p.16.
ICMOA meeting scheduled ..... 5/1/86,p.16.
MCOA sponsors auction, trade show ..... 5/1/86,p.17.
SDMVA holds team dart tournament ..... 5/15/86,p.10.
WAMO holds exposition ..... 5/15/86,p.12.
Kaufman named MAA man of the year ..... 5/15/86,p.13.
More than 200 attend PAMMA convention ..... 6/15/86,p.10.
WAMO elects directors ..... 6/15/86,p.13.
UAMA hosts open summer meeting ..... 6/15/86,p.17.
IAMOA holds tournament, elects officers ..... 6/15/86,p.20.
NAMA rebuts AMA ..... 6/15/86,p.20.
Name change announced at OMAA convention ..... 6/15/86,p.23.
Orlando attracts operators to FAVA show ..... 6/15/86,p.26.
365 compete on OMAA/Valley championship ..... 6/15/86,p.28.
AAMA asks JAMMA help ..... 7/15/86,p.10.
Martino receives CCMA award ..... 7/15/86,p.13.
Hawkins addresses UAMA meeting ..... 7/15/86,p.13.
Texas operators meet ..... 8/15/86,p.8.
MOMA holds summer meeting ..... 8/15/86,p.13.
NACA appoints Reinert ..... 8/15/86,p.13.
ICMOA holds annual meeting ..... 8/15/86,p.14.
Players form association ..... 9/15/86,p.7.
Testimonial planned for Schreiber ..... 9/15/86,p.12.
WAMO hosts fall conference ..... 9/15/86,p.12.
IAAPA schedules November trade show ..... 9/15/86,p.14.
NAMA completes wage survey ..... 9/15/86,p.16.
WVMVA hold convention, elects officers ..... 10/86,p.14.
MCMOA hosts annual convention ..... 10/86,p.14.
NAMA celebrates anniversary ..... 10/86,p.20.
NYCCMA holds convention ..... 10/86,p.20.
300 operators attend North Carolina convention ..... 10/86,p.29.
MOA '76 marked coin-op transition ..... 10/86,p.62.
Counterfeiters squeezed at JAMMA show ..... 10/86,p.71.

CIGARETTE VENDING

Coins brand withdrawn ..... 12/1/85,p.12.
AMA seeks ban on cigarette ads, vending machines ..... 12/15/85,p.8.
AMOA criticizes medical associations' proposal ..... 3/15/86,p.7.
NAMA completes study of cigarette machines ..... 4/1/86,p.12.

Cigarette vending faces problems ..... 5/15/86,p.16.

CRANES

Crane merchandisers approvals,actions ..... 10/86,p.8.

CRIME

Hide and Seek under investigation ..... 2/86,p.17.
FBI aims at counterfeits ..... 3/1/86,p.64.
Southern states seize poker machines ..... 4/15/86,p.6.
Faco West enjoined from importing Nintendo games ..... 6/15/86,p.8.
FBI seizes Faco West goods, records ..... 8/15/86,p.6.
O'Reilly conviction upheld ..... 8/15/86,p.10.
Faco West folds ..... 9/15/86,p.6.
Newsletter says cranes illegal in Pennsylvania .... 9/15/86,p.10.
FBI seizes printed-circuit boards ..... 10/86,p.9.
Truth testing carries benefits,risks ..... 10/86,p.83.

DARTS

NOMAC sponsors $20,000 dart tourney ..... 12/1/85,p.16.
McKennon to organize AMOA dart program ..... 12/31/85,p.9.
Operators see darts fly ..... 2/86,p.18.
Dart machines to be awarded at tournament ..... 4/1/86,p.10.
Dart Shootout winners to compete in Germany 5/15/86,p.13.
1,324 compete in Bullshooter Challenge ..... 6/15/86,p.13.
Valley enters electronic darts market ..... 10/86,p.10.

DISTRIBUTING

Atlas distributing adds staff members ..... 12/1/85,p.16.
Mondial open house draws operators ..... 12/15/85,p.10.
Optimistic operators attend party ..... 12/15/85,p.13.
Atlas adds Michigan branch ..... 12/31/85,p.11.
Kane amusement moves ..... 12/31/85,p.12.
Kane holds open house ..... 2/86,p.15.
Bally leaves distributing ..... 3/1/86,p.8.
Group forms Mass. distributor ..... 3/15/86,p.8.
Vendo/USI appoints World Wide ..... 3/15/86,p.9.
C.A. Robinson buys S.F. Bally Advance ..... 4/1/86,p.8.
Cleveland coin opens Michigan office ..... 4/1/86,p.9.
Bally Sente recognizes Brady & Lanier ..... 4/1/86,13.
Rowe names Atlas ..... 4/15/86,p.8.
Atlas appoints Larson ..... 4/15/86,p.10.
Mondial opens Long Island office ..... 4/15/86,p.10.
Coin Machine dist. adds to Rowe line ..... 4/15/86,p.10.
Betson's ACME East begins open house series ... 4/15/86,p.11.
Brady Dist. opens Tennessee office ..... 5/1/86,p.10.
Valley honors distributors ..... 5/1/86,p.14.
Entertainment Enterprises to distribute phones .... 5/1/86,p.15.
Sega appoints Sayers ..... 5/1/86,p.15.
T.O.P. Distributing holds open house ..... 5/1/86,p.15.
C.A. Robinson holds open house ..... 5/1/86,p.16.
Neco hosts summer open house ..... 7/15/86,p.13.
Mountain Coin holds open house ..... 8/15/86,p.15.
Belam adds Vaughn ..... 9/15/86,p.10.
Mondial acquires Albert Simon, Inc. ..... 9/15//86,p.10.
Peach State reorganizes, hosts open house ..... 10/86,p.16.
Distributors plan Nov. open houses ..... 10/86,p.18.
Brady adds Stutz, Cottrell ..... 10/86,p.26.

DRIVING GAMES

Driving Games fulfill players' fantasies ..... 5/1/86,p.24.

JUKEBOXES

Obsolescence plays at Jukebox Junkyard ..... 12/15/85,p.42.
Video Boxes used in rock tour ..... 1/15/86,p.9.
Jukebox compliance program announced ..... 6/15/86,p.13.
Aladdin's Castles picks Rowe jukebox ..... 6/15/86,p.18.
Cost of Jukebox license to increase ..... 10/86,p.9.

LASER DISC TECHNOLOGY

Seeburg debuts Laser Music system ..... 7/15/86,p.15.
Seeburg CD one stop ..... 8/15/86,p.10.
Distributors peek at Rowe CD unit ..... 10/86,p.10.

MANUFACTURING

Bally announces European changes ..... 12/1/85,p.10.
Atari's George Opperman dies ..... 12/1/85,p.12.
Bally Sente joins VOCAL program ..... 12/1/85,p.14.
Campbell named to Status post ..... 12/15/85,p.11.
Police take aim at Hogan's Alley ..... 12/15/85,p.11.
Sunn moves headquarters ..... 12/15/85,p.12.
Rock-ola takes distributors to China ..... 12/15/85,p.12.
Seeburg hopes for revolution ..... 12/15/85,p.14.
Banner employees buy company ..... 12/31/85,p.8.
Digital withdraws AMOA support ..... 12/31/85,p.8.
Dynamo introduces stronger rods,new ball ..... 12/31/85,p.10.
Bank Shuffleboard ready to go ..... 12/31/85,p.10.
Kaminkow joins Premier ..... 12/31/85,p.10.
Konami breaks ground for building ..... 12/31/85,p.12.
Atari consolidates in Milpitas ..... 12/31/85,p.12.
Bally to acquire MGM Grand ..... 12/31/85,p.12.
Memetron names Cosintino ..... 1/15/86,p.7.
Seeburg appoints distributors ..... 1/15/86,p.8.
Atari sponsors contest ..... 1/15/86,p.8.
Nichibutsu opens Portland office ..... 1/15/86,p.16.
New company to license games ..... 2/86,p.14.
Bally Sente tabs Locke ..... 2/86,p.15.
Atari appoints Pacific Vend ..... 2/86,p.16.
IDEA files under Chapter 11 ..... 3/1/86,p.8.
Digital sells Video Group ..... 3/1/86,p.9.
Taitel loses Atari line ..... 3/1/86,p.9.
Atari names Rice ..... 3/1/86,p.12.
Premier changes drop target ..... 3/15/86,p.8.
Margold names Cinematronics ..... 3/15/86,p.9.
Super Mario Brothers creates stir in Japan ..... 4/1/86,p.9.
Cashphone picked for National contract ..... 4/1/86,p.12.
Status marketing cash-payout trivia in U.K. ..... 4/1/86,p.12.

PLAY METER ASKS:

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY?

"

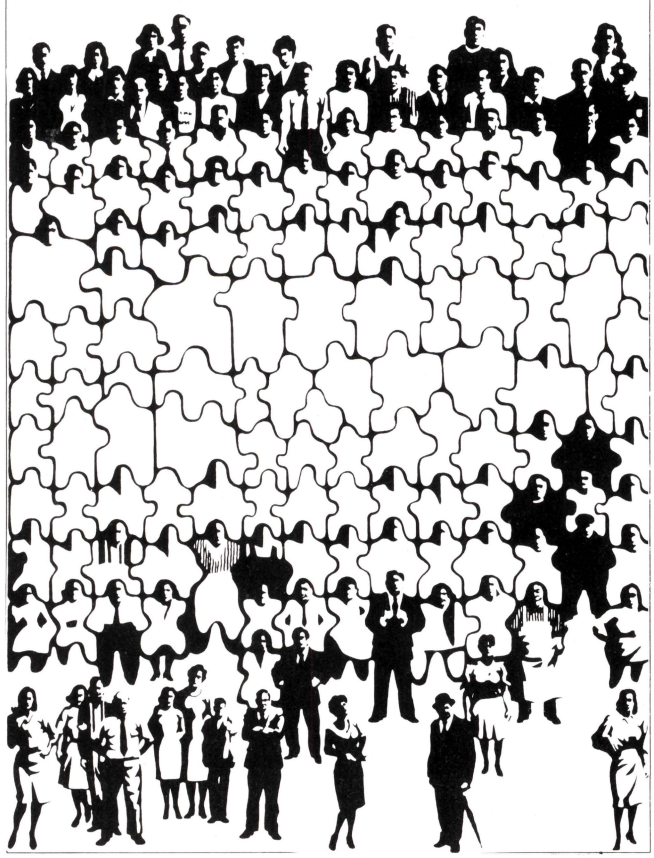
I think that the people who were in this business to begin with, and are still in this business will remain in the business because they were in the business of coin operated equipment for a living and not a fast buck. Overall I believe the current operators that are strong will be here another 20 years and not the fly-by-nights that were out to make a fast buck! Current Operators-- Hang in there!

MISSISSIPPI

Hard work and some business sense and there is still good money to be made!

NEW MEXICO

"



Nintendo promotes Weber ..... 4/1/86,p.13.
Bally Sente recognizes Brady and Lanier ..... 4/1/86,p.13.
Premier,Aladdin's Castles host pinball playoff ..... 4/1/86,p.13.
Brainard leaves Dynamo ..... 4/15/896,p.7.
Nintendo's money grab winners get $4,245 ..... 4/15/86,p.9.
Rand of Phoenix appoints three ..... 4/15/86,p.9.
Banner holds spring showcase ..... 4/15/86,p.10.
Konami promotes Korbecki ..... 4/15/86,p.10.
SMS promotes Mirando,Pietrangelo ..... 4/15/86,p.10.
Bally sponsors fifties party ..... 4/15/86,p.11.
Konami adds Inoue, Takao to R & D staff ..... 5/1/86,p.10.
Dynamo develops hockey,appoints Robbins ..... 5/1/86,p.13.
Compuvend moves ..... 5/1/86,p.16.
Rowe International hosts open house ..... 5/1/86,p.17.
Arachnid seeks damage award ..... 5/15/86,p.9.
Films feature Sente games ..... 5/15/86,p.10.
Rand of Phoenix appoints three ..... 5/15/86,p.12.
Sente production begins in Italy ..... 5/15/86,p.13.
U.S. Billiards becomes Imagination Leisure ..... 6/15/86,p.10.
Atari holds reunion meeting ..... 6/15/86,p.13.
Intermark acquires Star ..... 6/15/86,p.18.
Aladdin's Castles picks Rowe jukebox ..... 6/15/86,p.18.
Atari appoints distributors ..... 6/15/86,p.20.
Siemieniec joins Cinematronics ..... 6/15/86,p...20.
Idea obtains patent ..... 6/15/86,p.20.
SMS promotes two ..... 6/15/86,p.20.
Digital Controls closes doors ..... 7/15/86,p.7.
Nintendo develops new gun for U.S. ..... 7/15/86,p.8.
Nintendo,Sega introducing home systems ..... 7/15/86,p.9.
Atari reports profits ..... 7/15/86,p.11.
Gauntlet II promotion contest built-in ..... 7/15/86,p.11.
Rand offers phone services, appoints six ..... 7/15/86,p.13.
Sun acquires Kitkorp ..... 7/15/86,p.8.
Merit buys Nomac assets ..... 8/15/86,p.6.
Seeburg opens CD one stop ..... 8/15/86,p.l0.
Susan Jarocki joins Data cast ..... 8/15/86,p.13.
Backer joins Sente ..... 8/15/86,p.15.
Sega appoints Hill ..... 8/15/86,p.15.
Dynamo promotes hockey table ..... 8/15/86.
New Marketing director joins Rand ..... 9/15/86,p.14.
Nintendo prevails in Kong appeal ..... 9/15/86,p.14.
Bally names Wahby ..... 9/15/86,p.16.
Michael Pace announces opening of U.S. Games ..... l0/86,p.16.
Arachnid contracts with Anheuser Busch ..... l0/86,p.18.
Konami offers toll-free service number ..... l0/86,p.20.
Atari's Dick Needleman semi-retires ..... l0/86.p 22.
Atari adds Cosentino, realigns sales territories ..... l0/86,p.22.
Poole,Szymczak join Bally ..... l0/86,p.22.
Campbell joins Memetron ..... 10/86,p.25.
Konami uses staffers in Top Gunner ad ..... l0/86,p.25.
Kesselman joins Williams ..... l0/86,p.25.
Tecmo names Castro to marketing post ..... 10/86,p.25.
Mars names Kinder ..... l0/86,p.25.
Arachnid editor invited to writer's conference ..... l0/86,p.27.
Night Stocker debuts at Las Vegas distributor

meeting.....10/86,p.27.
Ride Dynamics introduces Bolwell kiddie rides.....10/86,p.31.

PAY TELEPHONES

Pay phone conference set.....1/15/86,p.7.
DDL Com Con renaming phone.....1/15/86,p.8.
COCOT industry faces confusing patchwork.....1/15/86,p.10.
Article notes pay-phone problems.....3/1/86,p.9.
Northwestern Bell denies NATA charge.....3/1/86,p.10.
Pay-phone conference planned.....3/15/86,p.9.
Rates Technology sign NBT contract.....4/1/86,p.10.
Pay-phone connection still fuzzy.....4/15/86,p.26.
Williams pay phone in production.....5/1/86,p.14.
National Payphone Assoc. holds conference.....5/15/86,p.10.
Goeken addresses pay-phone conference.....5/15/86,p.14.
La. Pay-phone operators seek lower tariff.....6/15/86,p.10.
Wiltelco 5000 now bi-lingual.....8/15/86,p.15.

PINBALL

Game Plan comes back with pins.....12/1/85,p.8.
Pinball conversions seek market.....2/86,p.38.
Premier, Aladdin's Castles hosts pinball playoff...4/1/86,p.13.

POOL

Ohio pool-league update.....12/15/85,p.7.
ICMOA plans pool tournament.....12/15/85,p.12.
Wisconsin holds 8-ball championship.....4-1-86,p.14.
Pool tables bring steady income.....4/15/86,p.14.
VNEA championships held.....8/15/86,p.10.

TRADE SHOW COVERAGE

Corks pop at ATEI.....2/86,p.32.
Slots dominate Dutch show.....2/86,p.35.
IMA show boasts little new.....3/15/86,p.74.
Banner holds spring showcase.....4/15/86,p.10.
Vending show sets record.....5/1/86,p.8.
Hope displayed at Irish show.....5/1/86,p.36.
Pizza operators to hold Dec. show.....10/86,p.25.

INDUSTRY TRENDS, DEVELOPMENTS AND PRACTICES

COINMAN INTERVIEW

Dick Hawkins.....12/1/85,p.24.
Dick George.....1/15/86,p.14.
Paul Beall.....2/86,p.20.
Stan Jarocki & Dave Marofske.....5/1/86,p.18.
Bill Rickett & Mark Struhs.....6/15/86,p.36.
Maury Ferchen.....8/15/86,p.20.
Jim Pierce.....9/15/86,p.40.
Bob Lundquist.....10/15/86,p.74.

GENERAL

Players hold key to game development.....3/1/86,p.44.
Putting players first.....7/15/86,76.
Booking features key game adjustments.....8/15/86,p.24.
Computerizing calls for caution.....8/15/86,p.28.
Good themes make good games.....8/15/86, p.30.
Portland operators praise Blattspieler.....9/15/86,p.12.
Table games hanging on.....9/15/86,p.30.
Promotions pay off.....9/15/86,p.46.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS

Dynamo develops hockey,appoints Robbins.....5/1/86,p.13.
Seeburg debuts Laser Music system.....7/15/86,p.15.
Merit buys Nomac assets.....8/15/86,p.6.
Computaweigher changes product.....9/15/86,p.14.
Group develops universal button.....10/86,p.18.
Sharpe plans multimedia concept.....10/86,p.20.

INDUSTRY GOODWILL

Hesch Fund awards scholarship.....12/15/86,p.9.
Atari sponsors contest.....1/15/86,p.8.
Great Priazzo Shootout benefits handicapped children.....3/15/86,p.9.
Time Out helps shuttle crew children.....4/1/86,p.10.
Nintendo's money grab winners get $4,245.....4/15/86,p.9.
$2,000 donated to Hesch Fund.....6/15/86,p.17.
Handicapped hands add special touch.....6/20/86,p.48.
Capcom donating to Hesch fund.....7/15/86,p.10.
Gauntlet II promotion contest built-in.....7/15/86,p.11.
Super Sprint winner buys more.....7/15/86,p.12.
Promotion ties in Grand Lizard, Toronto Zoo...8/15/86,p.15.
Bally sponsors Hesch fund benefit.....10/86,p.25.

INDUSTRY GROWTH

Williams announces earnings, new venture.....12/31/85,p.9.
Status reports record revenues.....2/86,p.15.
Williams reports doubled revenues.....3/1/86,p.10.
Mondial opens Long Island office.....4/15/86,p.10.
Showcase expands production facility.....5/15/86,p.13.
Williams announces higher revenues.....6/15/86,p.17.
Ride Dynamics formed.....6/15/86,p.17.
Antique Apparatus moves.....6/15/86,p.20.
Atari reports profits.....7/15/86,p.11.
50th State Coin-Op opens.....7/15/86,p.12.
Harris opening PR firm.....7/15/86,p.12.
Location contracts pay off.....7/15/86,p.65.
Williams reports earnings.....9/15/86,p.8.

PLAY METER ASKS:

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY?

"

Excellent because of the advantage of conversions! I buy the super dedicated games and all the best kits.

UTAH

Still in a state of transition. There is an attempt to improve communication between operators, manufacturers, and distributors concerning business problems. There are many power struggles continuing in the different associations which will probably continue for some time.

FLORIDA

For the small operator, we feel like we're getting squeezed out by the bigger operators. Our cash flow is much smaller so in turn it's much harder to buy new equipment to keep up with the big boys. The bigger get bigger and the small guy seems to get smaller! It's damn hard out here.

"

MINNESOTA

Showbiz restructuring completed ..... 9/15/86,p.10.
The Game Exchange acquires kit inventory ..... 10/86,p.18.
New company enters kit market ..... 10/86,p.18.
Status reports increased revenues ..... 10/86,p.20.
Coinmach Tel acquires Cooney Telecom ..... 10/86,p.26.

INDUSTRY SHAKEOUT

IDEA files under Chapter 11 ..... 3/1/86,p.8.
Universal drops video-game business ..... 3/15/86,p.8.
Chain restructuring to avoid Chapter 11 ..... 4/1/86,p.14.
Digital Controls closes doors ..... 7/15/86,p.7.
Great Britain ..... 7/15/86,p.13.

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Operators see darts fly ..... 2/86,p.18.
Walk-through video developed ..... 7/15/86,p.11.
Quiz games no trivial pursuit ..... 8/15/86,p.16.
3-D Technology on horizon ..... 1/15/86,p.22.

GOVERNMENT & LEGAL

VIDEO LOTTERIES

N.Y. ends lottery games ..... 1/15/86,p.7.
Illinois lottery players to use video terminals ..... 3/15/86,p.6.

PATENTS

IDEA obtains Patent ..... 6/15/86,p.20.

COPYRIGHTS

Faco West enjoined from importing Nintendo games ..... 6/15/86,p.8.
jukebox compliance program announced ..... 6/15/86,p.13.
Sentencing tops legal action in illicit games ..... 6/15/86,p.14.
South Korea pledges copyright laws ..... 9/15/86,p.9.
Arachnid awaits hearing dates on damages ..... 10/86,p.9.
Ikari Warrior copies appear ..... 7/15/86,p.8.

LEGISLATION

AMA seeks ban on cigarette ads,vending machines ..... 12/15/85,p.8.
New York legislation summary ..... 12/15/85.
PAMMA warns operators to beware ..... 12/1/85,p.
Smoking ban opposed ..... 4/1/86,p.13.
Senators introduce polygraph bill ..... 4/15/86,p.6.
Legal issues key to merchandisers,redemption ..... 7/15/86,p.52.
Operators defeat Florida county tax proposal ..... 10/86,p.12.

TAX TIPS

Choosing an accountant ..... 12/1/85,p.39.

Tax code offers disaster relief ..... 12/15/85,p.37.
Dividend exclusion one of best loopholes ..... 12/15/85,p.37.
Preferred-stock dividend easy way to save taxes ..... 12/31/85,p.42.
Avoid involuntary S-cotp status termination ..... 12/31/85,p.42.
Year end tax planning uncertain ..... 12/31/85,p.42.
Real estate recovery period lengthened ..... 12/31/85,p.42.
Tax considerations of divorce ..... 1/15/86,p.26.
Tax reform to wait ..... 2/86,p.44.
Income-tax changes for 1986 ..... 2/86,p.44.
Car lease purchase effects unchanged ..... 2/86,p.44.
Divorced couples can share tax savings ..... 2/86,p.45.
Buy-sell agreement contains trap ..... 3/1/86,p.68.
Social Security costs spiral ..... 3/1/86,p.68.
Court upholds tax shelter ..... 3/1/86,p.70.
IRS ruling procrastinator's dream ..... 3/1/86,p.70.
Schedule C a red audit flag ..... 3/15/86,p.83.
Hiring spouse a tax bonanza ..... 3/15/86,p.83.
Stock redemption may cause trouble ..... 3/15/86,p.83.
Expired tax breaks may return ..... 3/15/86,p.83.
Beware alternative minimum tax ..... 4/15/86,p.38.
IRS tightens rule on investment seminars ..... 4/15/86,p.38.
Transfer your business tax-free ..... 4/15/86,p.39.
Borrow for your IRA contribution ..... 4/15/86,p.39.
Higher income boosts audit odds ..... 5/1/86,p.40.
Pension plans must be amended ..... 5/1/86,p.40.
Transfer stock for cash ..... 5/1/86,p.40.
IRS warning no longer hollow ..... 5/1/86,p.40.
Divorce can be taxing ..... 5/1/86,p.40.
Death and taxes ..... 6/15/86,p.60.
Buying and selling real estate ..... 7/15/86,p.81.
IRS continues 1099 crackdown ..... 7/15/86,p.81.
Tax aspects of bankruptcy ..... 8/15/86,p.40.
Retirement planning(part i) ..... 9/15/86,p.68.
Tax laws lessen incentive to incorporate ..... 9/15/86,p.70.
Retirement planning(Part II) ..... 10/86,p.104.

TAXES

Montreal to tax arcade games ..... 1/15/86,p.7.
Tennessee removes flipper tax ..... 6/15/86,p.17.
Operators battling taxes,licensing fee ..... 6/15/86,p.64.

TOURNAMENTS

Nomac sponsors $20,000 dart tourney ..... 12/1/85,p.16.
McKennon to organize AMOA dart program ..... 12/31/85,p.9.
ICMOA plans tournament ..... 1/15/86,p.8.
National table-soccer champions crowned ..... 1/15/86,p.9.
Nomac launches $50,000 promotion ..... 2/86,p.16.
AMOA tournament applications due April 1 ..... 3/15/86,p.6.
Dart machines to be awarded at tournament ..... 4/1/86,p.10.
Premier,Aladdin's Castles host pinball playoff ..... 4/1/86,p.13.
Wisconsin holds 8-ball championship ..... 4/1/86,p.14.
Pub Time kits now available ..... 4/15/86,p.7.
ICMOA sponsors tournament ..... 5/1/86,p.9.
Taito sponsors golf tournament ..... 5/1/86,p.10.
D & R Star holds $25,000 tournament ..... 5/1/86,p.15.
AMOA tournament draws 106 teams ..... 5/15/86,p.8.
SDMVA holds team dart tournament ..... 5/15/86,p.10.
Dart Shootout winners to compete in Germany 5/15/86,p.13.
Merit,Bumpers sponsor dart tournament ..... 6/15/86,p.18.
1,324 compete in Bullshooter Challenge ..... 6/15/86,p.13.
Players vie for $6,000 in N.Y.championship ..... 6/15/86,p.17.
IAMOA holds tournament, elects officers ..... 6/15/86,p.20.
365 compete in OMAA/Valley championship ..... 6/15/86,p.28.
Table-soccer championship and reunion set ..... 7/15/86,p.12.
Video game team seeks influence ..... 7/15/86,p.68.
Thousands compete in video tournament ..... 8/15/86,p.7.
VNEA championships held ..... 8/15/86,p.10.
Standard Vending starts weekly pool tournaments ..... 8/15/86,p.14.
IDEA plans 1987 dart tournament ..... 9/15/86,p.10.
152 compete in Ohio dart finals ..... 10/86,p.12.
Robbins captures Dynamo hockey championship ..... 10/86,p.12.

TECHNICAL

AIDS TO THE TRADE

Sealed bezels IEE ..... 1/15/86,p.33.
Acrylic Adhesive ..... 1/15/86,p.33.
Jensen tool catalog ..... 1/15/86,p.33.
EX-600 ..... 1/15/86,p.33.
Gem Top brochure ..... 1/15/86,p.33.
Plasti-cash ..... 1/15/86,p.34.
PCB repair system ..... 1/15/86,p.34.
Improved scoreboard ..... 1/15/86,p.34.
Jensen tool kit ..... 1/15/86,p.34.
250 watt switches ..... 2/86,p.50.
Free catalog ..... 2/86,p.50.
American Combination padlock ..... 2/86,p.50.
Cold-temperature adhesive ..... 2/86,p.50.
Aluminum walk-in van ..... 2/86,p.51.
Service manual ..... 2/86,p.51.
Tool catalog 2/86,p.51.
Circuit module ..... 2/86,p.51.
Portable Bldgs. ..... 2/86,p.51.
Gem Top for '86 Jeep ..... 2/86,p.52.
Price cut for OEMS ..... 2/86,p.52.
IEE products ..... 2/86,p.52.
Route-management Software ..... 3/15/86,p.85.
Shuffleboard wax ..... 3/15/86,p.85.
Electronic controls ..... 3/15/86,p.85.
Gauntlet monitor shield ..... 3/15/86,p.85.
Endless-loop cassette ..... 3/15/86,p.85.
New IEE displays ..... 3/15/86,p.85.
Floor sealer, roof system ..... 3/15/86,p.85.
Interconnection system catalog ..... 3/15/86,p.85.

Coin counter/packager ..... 5/1/86,p.47.
Print catalog and troubleshooting system..... 5/1/86,p.47.
Free payphone profit analysis..... 5/1/86,p.47.
Utility truck ..... 5/1/86,p.47.
Coin comparitors..... 5/1/86,p.47.
Coin-op mailing list..... 5/15/86,p.39.
Voice synthesizer ..... 5/15/86,p.39.
G19 monitor..... 5/15/86,p.39.
Medeco opens service centers..... 5/15/86,p.39.
Surface mount brochure..... 5/15/86,p.39.
Miniature motor ..... 6/15/86,p.76.
LCD modules..... 6/15/86,p.76.
Flame-resistant foam ..... 6/15/86,p.76.
Electronics books..... 6/15/86,p.76.
All-weather lock cap..... 6/15/86,p.76.

BEAR'S DEN

Bear back with technical info ..... 5/1/86,p.42.
CMOS chips used for greater logic..... 5/15/86,p.29.
Digital integrated circuits ..... 6/15/86,p.56.
Testing diodes ..... 7/15/86,p.60.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Eight-game blitz marks Critic's return ..... 3/1/86,p.52.
Summer brings coin-op heat ..... 6/15/86,p.53.

FRANK'S CRANKS

New solderer a favorite tool..... 12/15/86,p.40.
Conversion kits still excellent investment in '86..... 12/31/86,p.33.
Systems/Trivias/Conversions-1/15/86,p.28.
Look out for Pop-A-Shot static ..... 2/86,p.40.
Collection reports raise haunting question..... 3/1/86,p.60.
New games eagerly awaited ..... 3/15/86,p.77.
Video jukeboxes give operators advantage ..... 4/1/86,p.122.
ACME brings good signs ..... 4/15/86,p.34.
ACME review continues..... 5/1/86,p.29.
NYSCMA succeeds with show ..... 5/15/86,p.22.
Operator licensing,gray-area legalization intertwined ..... 6/15/86,p.46.
Washington expedition worthwhile..... 7/15/86,p.72.
Bally aiming high..... 8/15/86,p.42.
Letter fuels discussion ..... 9/15/86,p.56.
Pinball never left..... 10/86,p.92.

NEW PRODUCTS

Rush 'N Attack/Konami..... 12/1/85,p.41.
Washer-fluid dispenser/AIR-vend ..... 12/1/85,p.41.
Hangman/Status ..... 12/1/85,p.41.
Beat the Clock/Bally Midway..... 12/1/85,p.42.
American 101/American Pay Phone..... 12/1/85,p.42.
Kits/Kitkorp ..... 12/1/85,p.42.
MetroCross/Namco..... 12/1/85,p.42.
Crown's Golf in Hawaii/Sega..... 12/1/85,p.42.
Cruisin'/Jalco ..... 12/1/85,p.42.
T.N.K. III/SNK ..... 12/1/85,p.43.
Batter Up!/Doyle ..... 12/1/85,p.43.
SL 800/Wurlitzer ..... 12/15/85,p.47.
Tic Tac Trivia/Merit ..... 12/15/85,p.47.
Consert 240/NSM ..... 12/15/86,p.47.
Jetpack/Autorovo Kiddie ..... 12/15/86,p.48.
Lott-O-Help/SMS Mfg. ..... 12/15/85,p.48.
Crazy Crane/Dynamo ..... 12/15/86,p.48.
Matmania/Memetron ..... 12/15/86,p.49.
Videobox/Videobox Networks ..... 12/15/85,p.49.
ROCK/Premier ..... 12/15/85,p.49.
Trivia takes all/Kimble..... 12/31/85,p.46.
Video/Music Enter.Ctr./Rowe ..... 12/31/85,p.46.
The Golden 90/Rowe..... 12/31/85,p.46.
Sapphire 90/Rowe ..... 12/31/85,p.46.
DB-4/Antique Apparatus..... 12/31/85,p.47.
Wizz Quiz/Konami..... 12/31/85,p.47.
Turbo Sub/Entertainment Sciences ..... 12/31/85,p.48.
Pinball Action/Tehkan..... 12/31/85,p.48.
Audix 2000/Video Laser..... 12/31/85,p.48.
The Vanguard/Network Paystations ..... 1/15/86,p.31.
High Speed/Williams..... 1/15/86,p.31.
Bank Shuffleboard/Kel-Chad..... 1/15/86,p.32.
Showcase Crane/Showcase,Inc. ..... 1/15/86,p.32.
Western Elec.Smart Phone/Phone Master ..... 2/86,p.46.
Progressive Music Trivia/PGD,Inc. ..... 2/86,p.46.
Tournament Ice Hockey/Entertainment Ent..... 2/86,p.49.
Ring King/Data East..... 2/86,p.49.
Trivia Whiz IV/Merit ..... 2/86,p.49.
World Cup/Tehkan ..... 3/1/86,p.72.
Pop-A-Shot & sit-down/Pop-A-Shot..... 3/1/86,p.72.
R90V-20 Video Jukebox/Rowe ..... 4/1/86,p.125.
Name That Tune/Bally Sente ..... 4/1/86,p.125.
Sac Man kit/Bally Sente ..... 4/1/86,p.125.
Super Sprint/Atari ..... 4/1/86,p.125.
Cougar ZD-4/Valley ..... 4/1/86,p.125.
The Four Kings/Grand Products ..... 4/1/86,p.125.
Hang-ON Mini/Sega..... 4/15/86,p.42.
Shooting Master/Sega ..... 4/15/86,p.42.
Space Carrier/Sega ..... 4/15/86,p.42.
Space Crane/Sega ..... 4/15/86,p.42.
Iron Horse/Konami..... 4/15/86,p.43.
Jailbreak/Konami ..... 4/15/86,p.43.
Rock Encore/Premier..... 4/15/86,p.43.
Raven/Premier..... 4/15/86,p.43.
Playfair Shuffleboard/Playfair..... 4/15/86,p.43.
The New Generation/Compuvend..... 5/1/86,p.43.
Phraze Craze/Merit..... 5/1/86,p.43.
Telco E120B/Telco..... 5/1/86,p.43.
Alpha Mission/Trade West ..... 5/1/86,p.44.
VS.Super Mario Bros./Nintendo ..... 5/1/86,p.44.
VS.Gumshoe/Nintendo..... 5/1/86,p.44.
Big Event Golf/Taito America ..... 5/1/86,p.44.
Land-Sea-Air Squad/Taito America..... 5/1/86,p.44.

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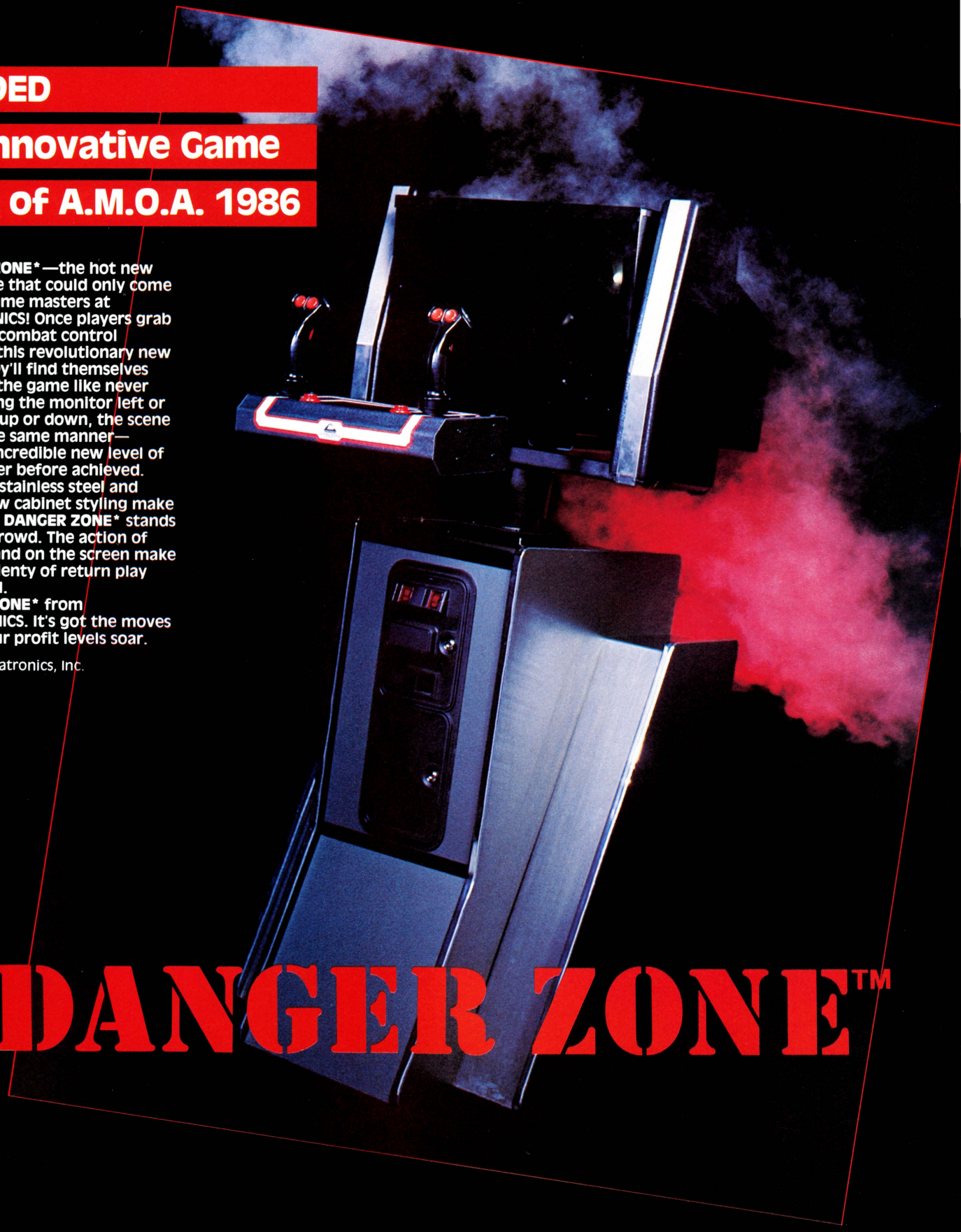

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Legend of Kage/Taito America ..... 5/1/86,p.44.
Showcase Jr./Rowe ..... 5/1/86,p.44.
Super Triv-Quiz/Status ..... 5/1/86,p.46.4.
Break Thru/Data East ..... 5/1/86,p.46.
Speed Buggy/Data East ..... 5/1/86,p.46.
Hex Pool/Coin Machine Dist. ..... 5/15/86,p.36.
Health Corder/Kubota.Ltd. ..... 5/15/86,p.36.
Battle Lane 5/Romstar ..... 5/15/86,p.36.
Tokio/Romstar ..... 5/15/86,p.36.
Konami gt/Konami ..... 5/15/86,p.37.
Nemesis/Konami ..... 5/15/86,p.37.
Indoor/outdoor/Konami ..... 5/15/86,p.37.
Pay Phone/Public Pay Phone ..... 5/15/86,p.37.
Guardian/Kitkorp ..... 5/15/86,p.38.
Alley Master/Cinematronics ..... 5/15/86,p.38.
Trivia Madness/Remake Ind. ..... 5/15/86,p.38.
Quartet/Sega ..... 6/15/86,p.68.
Wonderboy/Sega ..... 6/15/86,p.68.
301 Bullseye/Grand Products ..... 6/15/86,p.68.
Spiker/Bally Sente ..... 6/15/86,p.69.
Fortune Crane/Coin-it ..... 6/15/86,p.69.
Halley's Comet ..... 6/15/86,p.69.
Gladiator/Taito America ..... 6/15/86,p.70.
Mania Challenge/Memetron ..... 6/15/86,p.70.
New Kiddie Rides/Ride Dynamics ..... 6/15/86,p.70.
Ikari Warriors/Tradewest ..... 6/15/86,p.70.
Idea Ball/Idea ..... 6/15/86,p.71.
Grand Lizard/Williams ..... 6/15/86,p.71.
Trojan/Romstar ..... 6/15/86,p.71.
Rotary Merchandiser/Century ..... 6/15/86,p.72.
Good Luck Crane/Kiddie Rides ..... 6/15/86,p.72.
Rack and Roll/Status ..... 6/15/86,p.72.
Road Runner/Atari ..... 6/15/86,p.73.
Gauntlet/Atari ..... 6/15/86,p.73.
Breath Test Alco-Lyzer200/Eastern ..... 6/15/86,p.73.
Max RPM/Bally Midway ..... 6/15/86,p.74.
Motordome/Bally Midway ..... 6/15/86,p.74.
Weight Check/Computaweigher ..... 6/15/86,p.74.
Reel Run/Grayhound ..... 6/15/586,p.75.
Skill Crane/Grayhound ..... ,p.75.
Super Bear/Grayhound ..... 6/15/86,p.75.
Privette/Int'l Comm. ..... 6/15/86,p.75.
Hollywood Heat/Premier ..... 6/15/86,p.75.
Hoop Shot!/Doyle ..... 7/15/86,p.88.
Pro Pitch/Doyle ..... 7/15/86,p.88.
Breath Shot/Brooke-C0. ..... 7/15/86,p.88.
Lazer Maze/Lazer Maze ..... 7/15/86,p.88.
Gauntlet II/Atari ..... 7/15/86,p.89.
Ninja Web/Allegro ..... 7/15/86,p.89.
Powerline Go5400/Gladwin ..... 7/15/86,p.90.
Laser Music/Seeburg ..... 7/15/86,p.90.
Arkanoid/Romstar ..... 7/15/86,p.90.
Empire City:1931/Romstar ..... 7/15/86,p.90.
Big Bucks/Dynasoft ..... 7/15/86,p.90.
Electrica-ITT/Payphone ..... 7/15/86,p.91.
Rygar/Tecmo ..... 7/15/86,p.91.
Black Belt/Bally Midway ..... 7/15/86,p.92.
Rampage/Bally Midway ..... 7/15/86,p.92.
Omniphone 2010/Intellicall ..... 7/15/86,p.92.
Road Kings/Williams ..... 8/15/86,p.47.
Trimline/Public Pay Phone ..... 8/15/86,p.47.
Knockdown/Meltec ..... 8/15/86,p.47.
Astronauts/Bafco ..... 8/15/86,p.48.
Sex Phrase Craze/Merit ..... 8/15/86,p.48.
Table Talk Plus/Tiffany Telcom ..... 8/15/86,p.48.
Enduro Racer/Sega ..... 8/15/86,p.48.
Easy Score/Wyvern Designs ..... 8/15/86,p.49.
Kramer Krane/Kramer ..... 8/15/86,p.49.
SaunaTone/Tan-Me ..... 8/15/86,p.49.
Talking Courtesy Phone/T.A.Phones ..... 8/15/86,p.50.
Wurlitzer SL 600/Deutche Wurlitzer ..... 8/15/86,p.50.
Baby Boom Challenge/Status ..... 8/15/86,p.50.
Championship Sprint/Atari ..... 9/15/86,p.71.
Alcon/Taito ..... 9/15/86,p.71.
Renegade/Taito ..... 9/15/86,p.71.
N.Y.Captor/Taito ..... 9/15/86,p.71.
Double Up/Multitech ..... 9/15/86,p.72.
PlayChoice-10/Nintendo ..... 9/15/86,p.72.
Smartphone III/Int'l Comm. ..... 9/15/86,p.73.
Breath Analyzer/Communidyne ..... 9/15/86,p.73.
Speed Rumbler/Capcom ..... 9/15/86,p.73.
Bubble Bobble/Romstar ..... 10/86,p.110.
Genesis/Premier ..... 10/86,p.110.
Telco Coin Phone/Telco ..... 10/86,p.110.
Body Slam/Sun ..... 10/86,p.111.
Life Force/Konami ..... 10/86,p.111.
Top Gunner/Konami ..... 10/86,p.111.
Dynamo Hockey/Dynamo ..... 10/86,p.111.
Night Stocker/Bally Sente ..... 10/86,p.112.
Street Football/Bally Sente ..... 10/86,p.112.
Pay Phone Junior/Multi Tec ..... 10/86,p.112.
Special Force/Bally Midway ..... 10/86,p.113.
VS.Slalom/Nintendo ..... 10/86,p.113.
Series 100 Pay Phone/Tatung ..... 10/86,p.114.
Kramer Mini Krane/M.Kramer ..... 10/86,p.114.
Gum Ball Krane/M.Kramer ..... 10/86,p.114.
Multi-System/Pro Circuitry ..... 10/86,p.115.
Flower/Komax ..... 10/86,p.115.
Jumbo Skill Crane/Grayhound ..... 10/86,p.115.
Out Run!/Sega ..... 10/86,p.116.
Clash Road/Status ..... 10/86,p.116.

INSTRUCTIONAL ARTICLES

Seeburg conducts service schools on CD ..... 8/15/86,p.14.

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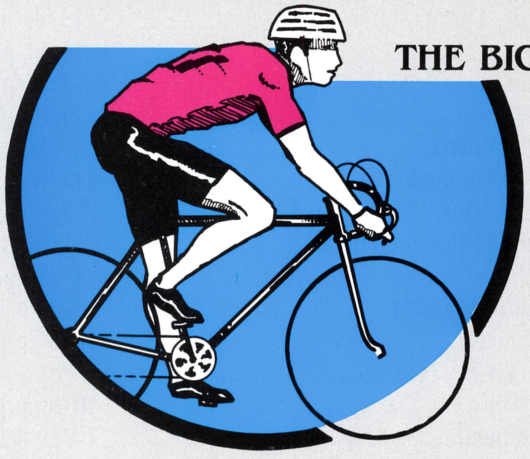

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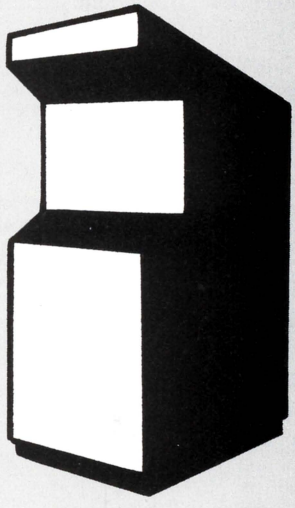

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GENERAL

ACME

Rosenthal to present ACME seminars ..... 12/31/85,p.11.
ACME will not admit public to show ..... 2/86,p.8.
Booths selling fast at ACME ..... 2/86,p.9.
Manufacturers plan surprise ..... 3/1/86,p.14.
Dedicated games merchandisers mark ACME ..... 4/1/86,p.16.
Bally sponsors fifties party ..... 4/15/86,p.11.
Seminars draw large operator attendance ..... 4/15/86,p.24.
ACME brings good signs ..... 4/15/86,p.34.
ACME review continues ..... 5/1/86,p.29.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Excise excess ..... 12/1/85,p.48.
Year ends with good signs ..... 12/15/86,p.54.
Opinions differ on parallel imports ..... 3/1/86,p.78.
Parallel importers face penalties ..... 3/1/86,p.78.
AAMA statement only advocacy ..... 3/1/86,p.78.
Players,not equipment provide industry backbone ..... 4/15/86,p.50.
AMOA position paper on counterfeit games and parallel imports ..... 5/1/86,p.51.
Identifying parallel imports ..... 5/15/86,p.44.
A decade of change: Are things really different? 6/15/86,p.82.
National pay-phone accounts want operators ..... 7/15/86,p.96.
An answer to Roger Sharpe ..... 8/15/86,p.56.
There's still hope Roger ..... 9/15/86,p.78.
A tribute to Bill O'Donnell ..... 10/86,p.122.

UP FRONT

A new show for a new beginning ..... 12/1/85,p.6.
Actions confirm revitalization ..... 12/15/85,p.6.
Play Meter will improve with industry ..... 12/31/85,p.6.
Give locations the facts ..... 1/15/86,p.6.
Darts can be addicting ..... 2/86,p.2.
First ACME like blind date ..... 3/1/86,p.7.
U.S.manufacturers playing catch up ..... 3/15/86,p.5.
Industry must ride imagination ..... 4/1/86,p.7.
Parallel boards a serious problem ..... 4/15/86,p.5.
A silver lining in the counterfeit cloud ..... 5/1/86,p.6.
Play Meter to return to one full issue plus update ..... 5/15/86,p.7.
ACME '87 excitement beginning ..... 6/15/86,p.6.
Alternatives worth a look ..... 7/15/86,p.6.
You can make a difference ..... 8/15/86,p.5.
From generation to generation ..... 9/15/86,p.5.
AMOA Expo Promises Excitement ..... 10/86,p.7.

MISCELLANEOUS

RDI files bankruptcy ..... 12/1/85,p.10.
Paglia new Montgomery Vending president ..... 12/1/85,p.14.
Bueschel publishes "Slots 4" ..... 12/1/85,p.14.
Tehkan changes to Tecmo ..... 2/86,p.14.
Unitel moves headquarters ..... 2/86,p.16.
New Way Sales awarded trophy,participates in parade ..... 2/86,p.16.
Taitel loses Atari line ..... 3/1/86,p.9.
Taito America moves,appoints Rochetti ..... 3/1/86,p.10.
Universal drops video-game business ..... 3/15/86,p.8.
Rates Technology signs NBT contract ..... 4/1/86,p.10.
J-S Sales introduces Cue Ball Kelly line ..... 4/1/86,p.12.
NSM-Lions partner retires ..... 4/1/86,p.12.
Auto-Photo acquires assets of Photo Vend ..... 4/1/86,p.14.
Pub time kits now available ..... 4/15/86,p..
Big Apple installs Cashphone in N.Y. Hotel ..... 4/15/86,p.8.
Mars Electronics appoints Ostendorf ..... 4/15/8,p.8.
Game Sales hosts spring show ..... 5/1/86,p.15.
Jani-Mint gets Caesar's contract ..... 5/1/86,p.17.
Cravens joins Capcom ..... 5/15/86,p.10.
Active Amusement hosts showcase ..... 5/15/86,p.13.
Mars Electronics names Cuella ..... 5/15/86,p.14.
Dooner joins Bob Snyder & Associates ..... 5/15/86,p.14.
U.S.Billiards becomes Imagination Leisure ..... 6/15/86,p.10.
Antique Apparatus moves ..... 6/15/86,p.20.
Ducay joins Grand Products ..... 6/15/86,p.20.
Southland,Nicktel sign contract ..... 6/15/86,p.20.
Morici joins Capcom ..... 7/15/86,p.9.
Capcom donates to Hesch fund ..... 7/15/86,p.10.
Walk-through video developed ..... 7/15/86,p.11.
Brook-Co appoints Petropoulas ..... 7/15/86,p.12.
The critic answers critic ..... 10/86,p.99.

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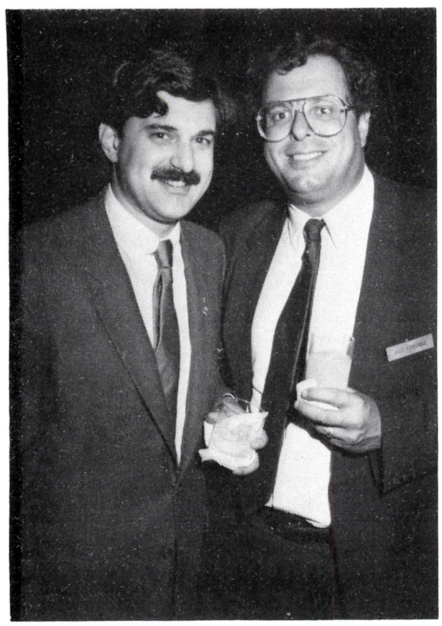
COINMAN
INTERVIEW
JOEL FRIEDMAN &
MICHAEL REINERT

"If an operator has a long range plan for building his business, he should consider a video jukebox. It is a must."

by Valerie Cognevich



Michael Reinert & Joel Friedman

Joel Friedman has been with Rowe International as vice president since 1984 when he joined the company to work with Jerry Gordon in distribution. In the spring of 1985 he got involved with the video jukebox program and soon took over complete control of the video jukebox program-sales, marketing, and distribution. He believes strongly in the video jukebox and with Joel's fierce determination, the video jukebox is making its presence felt in the industry.

Michael Reinert is Rowe's director of video operations, responsible for programming the tapes. He is a music specialist attorney and has been involved in the music industry as a musician, disc jockey, and a radio station manager. He has been the attorney for live acts, publishers, and composers.

With his extensive background in the music industry, it is clear why he is qualified for the job he does so well.

Is the video jukebox a fairly new concept?

FRIEDMAN: "No, it's not. Going back to the 1940s and up through the 1960s there were things called TeleView Scope-a-tone and PhonoView, which were early versions of what we would today call the video jukebox. What they tried to do there was coordinate film and records and tie the two together. Unfortunately, the technology didn't work. They couldn't get the record to sync with the scenes they were trying to do."

REINERT: "The earlier attempts relied on two systems trying to be synchronized rather than independent systems, one source for both, as we have today."

FRIEDMAN: "The concept was interesting and I think way ahead of its time. Those who thought up those early ideas were musical and entertainment geniuses. Unfortunately, the technology had not caught up yet.

Even with the new technology, are there stumbling blocks in convincing operators that a video jukebox will make them money?

FRIEDMAN: "Operators have just come off a bad experience and are just now getting back on their feet. They are leery as far as spending money. I don't think it's just video jukeboxes, though. Anything in the industry that is not the norm or tradition is having a difficult time."

Are video jukeboxes a fad item?

FRIEDMAN: "That to me is the crux of the whole video jukebox program. I relate it to a trend and not a fad. The trend is an extension of music, which is thousands of years old. Basically, as the population

changes and people's tastes change, their modes of entertainment change. The video jukebox has become a natural extension of the jukebox industry. We are selling video and audio entertainment that can be selected by a patron who is willing to pay for what he wants to see."

REINERT: "I don't think the question is so much whether video jukeboxes are a fad but whether (music) videos are a fad. MTV did not invent music videos. Instead, MTV was an outgrowth of music videos. When introduced, many may have thought of music videos as a fad. However, music videos have certainly gone through a tremendous growth period as an industry. Music videos are widely accepted and record companies and others making music videos realize they have a good idea and a good product and must learn to use it economically and efficiently. Therefore, we are seeing changes in production styles and maybe even a lower rate of production as opposed to the ridiculous outpouring of music videos of two years ago. As an industry and a creative form music videos are not a fad."

But when you talk of a slow down in music videos, are you talking about fewer people making them?

REINERT: "That's exactly what I am talking about."

But it seems like that would not be good for video jukeboxes.

REINERT: "When I say fewer I only mean about five or 10 percent. What's happening is that certain artists that don't necessarily rely on visual image because their reputation carries them enough are deciding not to make videos right away. Examples are Van Halen and Journey who both made the decision not to support their new records with music videos. Because they spent so much money producing the records they did not want to add more cost to be recuperated. That's good for two reasons. First, it allows record companies, who have to budget the money, to spend that promotional dollar on lesser known or new acts that need the promotional backing. Let's face it, everyone knows who Journey is. But groups like the Bangles, Til Tuesday, etc. owe their careers at this point to the ability to have music videos, not only made but seen. I know we have a limitation on the number of music videos we can show. Every programmer faces that. But when you are facing such a large menu of artists that you obviously have to go with the top artists, you are sacrificing the newer, creative talent.

Journey and Van Halen put out their albums, did well on them and now are putting out the music video. Both of those acts paid for the music video themselves. The first music video off the Van Halen album was a tribute to the Blue Angels and was magnificent. It was not needed to support the record but is a creative entity which we will be programming for years to come.

When I say there is less production, perhaps I don't really mean less production in terms of volume but a good shift in the emphasis of production so more people who deserve the video exposure are getting it."

But if groups continue to decide not to make videos along with their records, will that hurt the video jukeboxes?

REINERT: "No, it won't hurt at all because we will see groups taking control of their own videos. Lionel Richie is making his own videos now in a way that Motown couldn't afford to do. But Motown can now make a video for a lesser known group. There is a shift by the record companies and artists as to how they want to use the music video medium and I think that is an advantage to us. If you program the same names and faces all the time, you are not doing justice to your customers. What this does is give us diversity. We don't want to be just top 40 radio."

The box is certainly only as good as what you program into it. Is there any problem getting music videos for the jukebox?

REINERT: "The beauty of it is that the artists and record companies see the video jukebox as a very valuable medium at the promotional and commercial level; they are going to make money from it. If they see people taking an interest in video jukeboxes they are going to provide the product for the market."

FRIEDMAN: "Rowe made a conscious decision to continue with two formats in the same cabinetry-both video entertainment and record entertainment. What we have seen is that people will to pay for things they are familiar with, things that are popular. So part of our success is that we change our tapes every month because what people don't want is stale material. At the same time there are many things that will never be available on video tape such as big band sounds and nostalgia music and those things can be on records in the same box. So the bottom line is that an operator can program a given location by updating his records but allow Rowe to update the video selections each month."

Speaking of the programming, didn't you say that you were going to start taking requests?

FRIEDMAN: "Yes. We did our first viewers poll in which operators responded to a survey of favorite rock, urban contemporary and country. A good percentage of the November tape was requests. And we also, and this is important to know, talk to many operators every month about requests and what people want. We recognize the value of bringing things back from time to time. When Michael programs he may leave some selections on for more than one month."

Michael, could you explain briefly the process in programming a video jukebox?

REINERT: "I do all the legal and contractual work. Then I start making my decision about what to use. I get tapes like crazy and I keep my eyes on the trade magazines and tip sheets to know what's coming out. Once I have everything legally clear, I sit down and decide what to use. We offer three reels each month, rock, country and urban contemporary. There are 40 songs on each tape and some of those are the guaranteed top hits. All the tapes will have the Bruce Springsteens but will also have the specialty in the category. We also have some Home Box Office comedy shows on tape with stars like George Carlin. These certainly are not top 40 but they are videos that people will pay money to see. I also make sure not to program anything that would be offensive."

Is it possible for the operator to keep a tape instead of trading it in?

FRIEDMAN: "We have arrangements and contracts with the music community that call for monthly usage. From a legal standpoint the tapes must change each month. However, not only is it important to change the tapes from a legal standpoint, but we know that after 30 days the revenue income on those tapes will start to drop off and after 40 days it becomes dramatic. So that 30 day changeover is critical to the operator. Each month he has a new set of programming and a whole new excitement. We do repeat some things. Billy Joel automatically gets a two-month run. We don't change all 40 selections. We want to give the operator what he wants and what his customers want to hear.

"The bottom line of any operators business is the cashbox. We can sit here and tell you about all the hard work Rowe does, which is true, but the operator must see a return on investment and have a decent income. One interesting thing we are seeing with the video jukebox is that it is enabling operators to negotiate better commission splits. It has typically been 50/50 and operators are finding it increasingly difficult to make a fair income on that. At the same time, because of the increased revenue, the location's share does not decrease. Locations are also seeing an increase in their food and beverage business. Testimony of increased traffic in arcades and higher collections on other machines is typical when a video jukebox is added. These are all documented things that we have included in our presentation books for operators to take to the location. The video jukebox is a piece of equipment that can change the operator's business and his relationship with his clients. Well known operators have stated publicly that Rowe is right in its claims of what a video jukebox can do for an operator's business-increase customers' businesses, get better splits, solidify accounts, and do things with accounts operators never would have thought to do before.

"I am not saying the Rowe jukebox is a grand slam home run that you will make a million with in six months. What I'm saying is that you will pay it off in one to one and a half years and have a substantial increase in income after the pay-off period. If an operator has a long range plan for building his business, he should consider a video jukebox. It is a must."

But doesn't the cost of the video jukebox limit its possibility in every location?

FRIEDMAN: "I'm not saying that every location can afford a video jukebox. We understand that. It makes sense in about 20 percent of locations. But if I was an operator, every time I got ready to buy a new jukebox, I would have to consider a video jukebox. I have had operators tell me that $60 gross jukebox locations have turned into $200 dollar video jukebox locations. Places that may be poor jukebox locations may be good earning video jukebox locations. That is the key message to operators. The video jukebox has also opened up a vista of new locations that were traditionally thought of as bad jukebox locations."

What type of locations are good for video jukeboxes?

FRIEDMAN: "I'm going to refer to the presentation booklets I mentioned earlier. The two books are a compilation of experiences and suggestions of operators. We wanted to make it easy for the operator to use and easy for the location to understand. The top locations we have found for the video jukebox are military bases. Some operators have more than one on a base making it a good business opportunity. The pizza chains are turning out to be successful locations. Colleges and schools and locations around them are doing very well. We have had great acceptance in game rooms such as Aladdin's Castle. Aladdin's was extremely careful before making the decision to include video jukeboxes but now it says video jukeboxes increase its arcade business. We have had a video jukebox on test in a large truck stop with fantastic results. We expect that to carry through. Obviously, cocktail lounges and traditional bars have had good results. Other good locations have been transportation centers. We recently started a test with Host International and we now have equipment in three airports. It is absolutely unbelievable how these video jukeboxes have done at airports and bus stations. The hotel and motel industry has done well. An interesting phenomenon is amusement parks. You wouldn't think that video jukeboxes would make sense there but those locations have reported extremely high collection reports. We have had requests from department stores that would like to put them as an attraction and a draw.

"There are so many new opportunities, even in the fast food industry that would never have considered placing a jukebox."

"There are so many new opportunities, even in the fast food industry that would never have considered placing a jukebox. There is one in an independently-owned McDonald's franchise in Chicago that we feel very good about. The manager said the video jukebox has had a dramatic impact on his business. It's an area that will take a long time to develop but we're working on it. When it happens it will be dramatic. The jukebox in McDonald's was placed by an operator on a weekly rental arrangement. It is on free play. It is there strictly to bring more people into the location. The whole rental thing could be opening up."

How long has Rowe been involved in the video jukebox?

FRIEDMAN: "Rowe has been involved three years. We have all seen other companies come and go. The graveyard of other machines that are out there that operators can't get software or parts for is kind of pitiful. I have gotten a number of calls from operators who ask my help in getting their boxes running. But some of the brands they have are long gone. Rowe is committed to the video jukebox business. I think it is evident when you consider the amount of money and time spent in signing up record companies. We recognize as a company that we are paying an expensive price to put this together and feel it is our obligation to do it for the industry because of our position. However, it hasn't been easy because operators did get burned during the video game boom and are not ready to let it happen again; because some of the earlier video jukeboxes that were out there gave people a bad taste; and because it is a new concept which operators are not used to."

Rowe has just introduced its compact disc jukebox, which is able to play both CD and records. Isn't that going to be stiff competition for the video jukebox?

FRIEDMAN: "It will be competition because it is something else for the operator to look at. Rowe has announced that besides the combination jukebox there is also a CD jukebox that will be introduced when Rowe feels that the marketplace is ready. We don't deny that from a consumer standpoint, CD will be very hot but what we want to be careful of, before suggesting to our operators that they make a major change in their business and make a major investment, is that the equipment will not turn into one of the relics I mentioned before. Our approach was to build a combination unit that is still a regular Rowe jukebox. It's similar to the video jukebox which can also be used as a regular jukebox. Then if the marketplace moves to CD jukeboxes, and that may be years away, Rowe is prepared to move into that area. But it will enhance what Rowe is already offering, not take away from what it has."

What ever happened to the lease program Rowe introduced to help operators get a video jukebox without the financial risk?

FRIEDMAN: "That was something we introduced about a year and a half ago. We did it for about six months. We found that operators do not like to lease equipment, they want to own it. Those operators that took advantage of that program came out ahead. But since most want to own their equipment, we decided we didn't want to fight the operator so we dropped the program."

Why did Rowe decide to go with tape instead of laser technology?

FRIEDMAN: "We did a tremendous amount of planning and this was one of the areas we studied. The conclusion was that the next move in technology for video jukeboxes is not laser. If anything, we think laser technology is a Band-Aid for what is going to come. We feel it would not be a good move for operators."

REINERT: "We are convinced that current laser technology is a Band-Aid. But the question was, why tape? First, you have to understand that there are realistic needs you have to fulfill. One of the most important is supplying the product. Now, I won't sit here and say that laser technology is not superior to tape technology but let's look at application. Background or foreground, these are still jukeboxes and will be used in locations that have ancillary noise. Because of the superior tape technology we use, I would defy you to find a discernible difference in laser technology and our box. As far as audio, there may be a slight difference but not enough where it would affect the decision to buy the laser. Now what I was saying about availability of product, we work with the leading tape duplicator in the world, Bell & Howell. Bell & Howell uses Pancake duplication which allows for the highest quality tapes available. There is no cheap, good laser duplication in this country. It is

Thinking of entering the crane game?

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expensive and takes a long time. From a business point of view, efficiency, economics, and availability, tape is very important. From a technical point of view because of the superior duplication, there is no disadvantage to an operator because he is using a tape and not laser technology. And last, we want operators to change tapes every month. A tape will have wear after four or five weeks. As far as the future, we sat down with the engineers and designers for Sony Corp. of America. They showed us everything-CDV, DAT, 8-millimeter, the microchip, wafer technology-they showed us eight million different things! But they have an industry commitment to Beta and until one of these things comes out the obvious and true leader in the future, Rowe is sticking with what it's got."

So, what you are saying is there are a lot of other things out there in the way of technology besides the laser?

REINERT: "The one thing Joel and I can both sit here and confidently say is that the future is not the 12-inch laser disc. The compact disc used in the CD jukeboxes is an audio disc and is a completely different thing. There is something coming out called CDV which is going to be a compact disc that will also have five minutes of video on it. But that is five or eight years away and it is not digital video, it's analog. Out of the compact discs available, I would venture to say that less than 15 percent of the discs are digitally recorded. Listening to an analog recording on a CD is no different than listening to a new copy of the record. Listening to a digital recording on a CD is a wonderful thing but it's only as good as the sound system and the environment reflecting it. But I don't see CDV being the future."

But as with anything else in this industry, the operator can't wait for what might be. He needs something now that will make him money and have a little longevity.

FRIEDMAN: "What you have now is as good as what is likely to be for a very long time. Technology is running away at a pace far beyond consumer acceptance, beyond legislative acceptance, beyond so many factors. We made a decision three years ago to go with Beta because Beta is superior to VHS without question. After evaluating our options we have come to realize that we are working with the best. We are offering a proven product that Rowe will support and stand behind. We are watching the future but we are not going to pressure ourselves into making a change because it sounds good but that we think is nothing more than a Band-Aid."

What about manufacturer support from Rowe?

FRIEDMAN: "Rowe is not basing its entire future on just video jukebox. Rowe has a complete line of equipment."

REINERT: "Although Rowe didn't invent the video jukebox, I have walked into some major record companies introducing myself as the director of video operations at Rowe International and not only are the doors open but the welcome is warm. The record companies feel they can make money with the video jukebox so why not talk to the General Motors or the Pan Am of that industry.

AMOA SEMINAR REVIEWS

Frank Seninsky, at the podium, moderates the standing-room-only merchandiser seminar.

Barry Feinblatt, left, of UAI New Jersey, and Bob Snyder of Bob Snyder & Associates talk after the merchandiser seminar.

MERCHANDISERS--ENSURE FAIR ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE DOLLAR

A crowd eager for information and suggestions on successful crane operation gathered at the AMOA merchandiser seminar, creating a standing-room-only situation.

Frank "The Crank" Seninsky of Alpha Omega Sales served as moderator and introduced a panel that included Art Warner, vice president and general manager of Betson Enterprises; Barry Feinblatt, president of UAI New Jersey; John Vasallo, Jr., New Jersey commissioner of alcoholic beverage control and amusement game control; and William Treger, bureau chief for amusement games control.

After detailing the history of merchandising games over the years, specifically in the New Jersey area (including a slide presentation), New Jersey officials and game manufacturers agreed on the most important point to consider for operators of merchandisers--be sure the public gets fair entertainment for the dollar.

Merchandisers were credited with being a $50 million industry on the New Jersey seashore. Merchandisers started coming on strong in 1981 when New Jersey revised its laws to allow the commissioner to raise the price of play and prize value.

Merchandisers were described as an amalgam of skill and chance. It is not a vending machine, noted one panelist, referring to gumball dispensers that can be added to cranes.

A show of hands indicated that the majority of seminar attendees already operated merchandisers, commonly known as cranes. They were interested in the basics of crane operation.

"Merchandisers are direct payout machines," said Art Warner. "*Skee Ball* and other games are ticket dispensers and token payout machines." He strongly stated, "This is not a fad. These games are built to earn and earn. The only thing that restricts them is your own imagination. Players play the machine if they can win. It is another form of retailing. You must vary the merchandise, not just put soft goods out there."

Warner advised having fun with current trends, recalling an operator who put T-shirts in the machine for the Boston Red Sox and the New York Mets during the playoffs. "If income dwindles, go to suppliers and ask for suggestions. If you're not paying out, your income *will* dwindle. You won't build players if you don't let them win. Cranes are a little more work, but the income is steady."

He explained that if the law in an operator's area reads that nothing of value can be given out, then the operator can't use cranes unless the law is changed. If something of value can be given away, then the operator can probably find a way to have cranes.

"Greed has a way of finding it's way into our

industry," said Warner, referring to those who would unscrupulously lower the player's chance to win. "It has in the past and it will in the future. Police yourselves in crane operation and enjoy your income. I believe the way of the future is redemption and merchandising equipment.

Barry Feinblatt advised primarily plush merchandise for truck stop locations, C-stores, and zoos. For C-stores, customers are in two or three times a week. Rotation of merchandise and innovation are important for this type of location.

He suggested asking toy stores for the hot items and seeing if these can be picked up by the claw. He noted that one operator found much success with Legg's pantyhose in his crane.

Feinblatt explained the current trend of trading-up. A sign can be placed on the crane offering a trade of any three items won for a larger item. A second suggestion--have a crane filled with one-size small teddy bears that register a point value and can be traded-up for a larger prize.

"Packing plush items is a rip-off," said Feinblatt. He explained several ways of loading, adding that most route men just dump in the prizes. "Your own people can hurt you," Feinblatt cautioned. He recommends fluffing up the prizes after they are put into the machine. "Tease the player," he said, "make it possible for the claw to pick up the prizes. Be cautious of the dead space two inches off the wall--the claw can't reach there. Players are sophisticated. There are no dumb crane players. Put the better prizes where they can be retrieved by players."

Feinblatt said there are "crane dressers" in Europe, indicating that the presentation and prize-win ratio can make a difference. "If you are imaginative, go back to your crane on an hourly basis," he said. "Do expect to go to locations often or you'll rip off the player and he will know it!"

Moderator Frank Seninsky has operated cranes for many years and suggests giving location owners five percent of the gross income if they can become innovative with promotion ideas and fluff up the merchandise often. "Expect the merchandise out to be approximately 35 percent of gross income," he advised. "The more prizes out, the more the game is played. It's good showmanship to give good payout." But he cautioned, "You have to control each machine. If it pays out 45 percent, something is wrong."

A round of audience questions covered jewelry as a crane item, price tags on merchandise, money wrapped around items for "flash", and ways to increase the pick-up capability of the claw.

The panel agreed that jewelry must be on the top, not below other items. Authorities frown on price tags, it was noted, as prices may be fictitious. The tags also may get caught in the claw. If overseas-brand watches are put in the crane, operators are advised to put up a sign saying there is no warranty.

In response to the question of money wrapped around prizes, the resounding answer was NO, many times over, because it is misleading and gambling, pure and simple. It is a red flag for players. Astute players know they can't win a large prize for only 25 cents.

To further increase the claw pick-up function, panelists suggested surgical rubber tips to help the grasp; or even less noticeable, a touch of rubber cement.

Conversation about cranes continued after the close of the seminar as operators crowded around panelists and talked among themselves as they departed.

PlayMeter recognizes the importance of cranes in the coin-op industry and has marked January as a special crane issue. It also will include the Buyer's Guide of merchandisers, phonographs, countertops, and specialty games.

COPYRIGHTS AND TRADEMARKS: HOW TO STAY OUT OF JAIL

Bob Fay called the seminar "How to stay out of jail: copyright and trademark enforcement", an educational seminar. He was there to explain the enforcement program that's under way against counterfeit and parallel games in the United States. As much as anything else, though, Fay was conveying a warning. "The main thrust of our (AAMA) investigation," he said, "is at the illegal distributor level. However, there's also a fair number of operators that have come to my attention in the last seven months that are operating significant amounts of illegal equipment."

Fay has been director of industry affairs and enforcement for AAMA for that seven months. He was hired away from the FBI because, he said, "50 percent of the product in the United States was counterfeit," as was 95 percent in Canada and 95 percent in Europe. Twelve hundred boards have been taken out of circulation since that time, 12 individuals have been indicted, and one person has been convicted. Robert Walsh, an FBI agent, said some of the penalties for copyright violation can run as high as 5 years in prison, or a fine of $250,000, or both. Fay said he anticipates more arrests in the next month or so.

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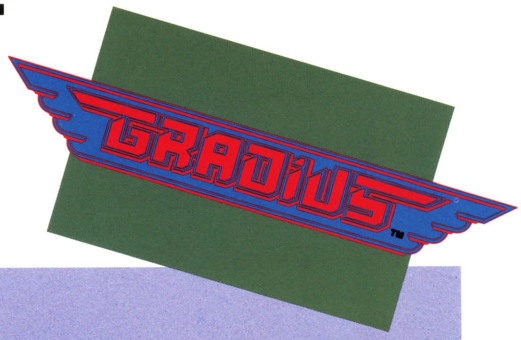

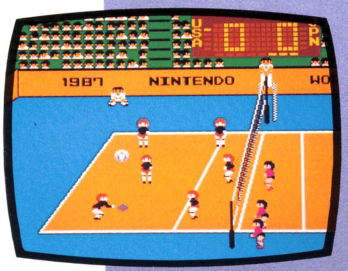

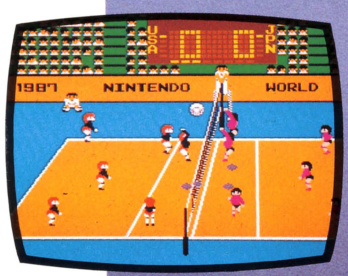

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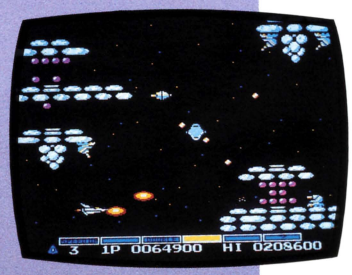

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The Systems Company

Jim Trucano introduces The Press Speaks seminar panelists, seated left to right: Steve Prowler, Valerie Cognevich, and Ed Adlum.

Fay pointed out that the operator complaints that they buy counterfeit games because manufacturers are "gouging them in prices" fail to take into consideration that it costs a manufacturer some $350,000 to develop a single game. If a manufacturer develops 24 games in a year, he said, 18 may fall by the wayside, with only six making it to the marketplace.

The big question for operators, Fay said, involves how to tell the difference between a legitimate game or board and counterfeits. After passing out booklets that listed 10 differences, he explained a few of the major ones, among them price, packaging, and connectors. Kathleen Mehltretter, an assistant U.S. attorney in Buffalo, N.Y., said that identifying such differences is often a matter of common sense and that federal prosecutors often use the points Fay explained to prove that a violation was willful.

Parallel boards, which Howard Lincoln of Nintendo defined as "boards that are lawfully made abroad...[but] are brought into the United States in violation of the exclusive distribution rights of the U.S. copyright owner," are another focus of the current investigations. An extremely low price is a giveaway in this area, too, as well as suspiciously early availability.

Fay said he has sent letters to 50 operators suspected of importing or operating illegal equipment, asking them to mail the games to him. Fifteen have replied. He said that at this point it's important for those involved to know that they can keep the cabinets and that the locations will know nothing of the seizure. He said that no "civil or criminal exposure" will result and that none of the manufacturers will be given any names. Things could change, he said, for those who wait too long to reply.

"We hope operators will realize," Fay said, "that the $400 they are saving is not worth it."

The Press Speaks: operator input welcome

Responding to a healthy operator question and answer session during The Press Speaks seminar, trade press representatives agreed to allocate space for operator viewpoints.

Panelists included Steve Prowler of *Vending Times*, Valerie Cognevich of *Play Meter*, and Ed Adlum of *Replay*. Jim Trucano of Black Hills Novelty in Rapid City, S.D., and a member of the AMOA board of directors, served as moderator.

All panelists said they were open to operators calling or writing them. Prowler noted that the trade press walks a fine line between manufacturers and the operator-readers it strives to serve. He said, "Help us help you and we can make this industry even stronger than it has become."

Cognevich explained that operator opinions are most important, and stressed the importance of working

Ed Adlum, left, joins Valerie Cognevich and Joel Weinberg following The Press Speaks seminar.

together. "This industry is small compared to a lot of others," she said. "One operator can cause a lot of problems for other operators. You can have ten places doing a good job and one operator down the street can be giving the rest a bad name."

She recommended operators turning to AMOA as a sounding board. "It has reorganized, initiated new programs, and added some board members who are 'balls of fire'."

Adlum spoke briefly, then the floor was opened for questions. Operators posing questions included Joel Weinberg of Cameron Musical Industries in San Diego; Ron Steckbauer of Pinball Plus in Burbank, Calif.; Sharon Harris of Stan Harris and Co.in Philadelphia; and Steve Epstein of The Broadway Arcade in New York City.

Subjects ranged from equipment polls to the negative connotation of the term "operator."

Harris questioned the polls, noting that locations that obtain trade magazines can give operators a difficult time requesting certain top games. Cognevich and Adlum both said the poll was a significant part of their publications and closely followed by operators looking for a gauge of game popularity. Many operators are waiting longer to buy games and look for a track record. *Vending Times* does not feature a poll.

Epstein asked about changing the stereotype of the term "operator." Harris responded from the audience that the industry must promote itself and suggested more active participation on the state association level to help the industry image.

A crowd of 70 attended the cigarette vending seminar.

Also mentioned were AAMA plans to send press releases quarterly to 3,800 syndicated news sources identifying the positive elements of coin-op.

Getting involved with local charities was another point to add in a public relations effort for our business. As one attendee noted, "We're an entertainment industry, and that's a positive point."

Cigarette Vending: stay close to local politics

Debates on smoking and health have increased of late. The cigarette vending seminar focused on this subject and others of importance to operators with cigarette vending routes.

The program was divided into two segments, the first a panel discussion answering specific questions posed to each member, and round table discussions for operators seeking answers from specific tobacco manufacturers.

Cigarette vending seminar participants are, left to right: Jack Kerner, Joloy Ann Davidson, Earl Gill, and Robert Monzingo.

The panel included Irv Otte of Brown and Williamson, Jack Slater of Lorillard, Jack Regan of R.J. Reynolds, Scott Feit of Philip Morris, and Richard Scherer of Oakland Cigarette Service in Oakland, Calif.

Roger Mozingo, senior vice president of the Tobacco Institute, addressed the group and mentioned the good news that the 99th Congress adjourned without enacting a single major anti-tobacco bill. He emphasized that

legislation first starts at the state level.

Operators have been concerned because of local proposals in cities like Topeka, Kan., for example, where recent attempts were made to ban the sale of cigarettes from machines on the erroneous assumption that teens obtain cigarettes from vending machines.

Arkansas operator Earl Gill of Earl Gill Enterprises in Hot Springs, Ark. explained that political action in our industry's favor takes place on a grass roots level. "Operators have to get involved in local politics. It's like planting a garden. You have to get attention on a local level on up to the governor. When a group introduces a bill, the subcommittee is where you get your action." Gill is treasurer of two state associations. He further advocates helping local politicians when they are running for office. "Then you have someone to talk to when legislation is proposed against your business."

Joloy Ann Davidson also addressed the gathering. Davidson is past president of the National Association of State Boards of Education. She discussed the "Helping Youth Decide" booklet published by the education board and made possible by The Tobacco Institute in Washington, D.C. It is an example of the social consciousness of the cigarette industry, and enforces the belief that smoking is an adult custom.

Questions posed to the panelists included the rise of vend prices and what action to take in situations where attempts are made to eliminate smoking in office complexes.

All panelists agreed that dollar bill acceptors are a convenience for consumers and that wider use is important to operators. The credit card issue was deemed too new for comment.

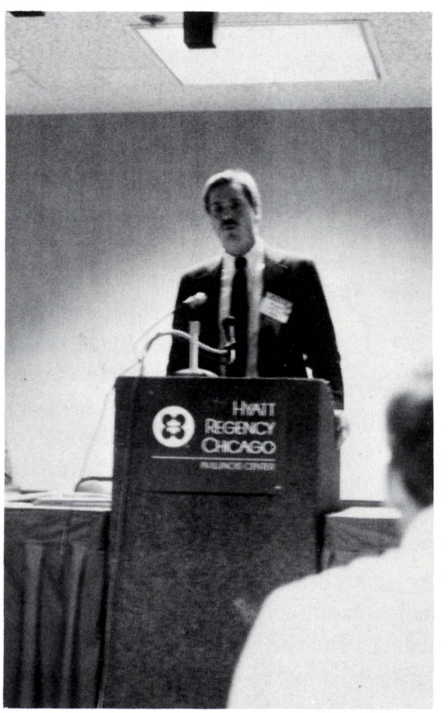
Operators were advised to let locations know they are good citizens and good businessmen. Educate the people in your locations to the fact that you are providing a service. Even have a state legislator come in and see your operation. Operators must get more politically astute.

Standardization: Out of the Twilight Zone

"I'm glad we're out of the Twilight Zone" were Joe Dillon's words as he stepped away from the podium. The "Twilight Zone" was how he described the "early days" of the standardization committee, when the dialogue between the committee members was not always clear and nobody was really sure who wanted what.

At this point in time, the committee's manufacturers and operators do seem to share the same positions. Steve Blattspieler of Bally, for example, described the

Steve Blattspieler of Bally explains that lead time and single-source supply are the manufacturers' biggest fears in standardization.



Craig Johnson, chairman of the standardization committee, says that standardization is not an overnight process.

Todd Erickson explains the "little things" addressed by the standardization committee make up 30 percent of operator service calls.

manufacturers' goal in the project as that of cutting service calls to a minimum. It could have come right out of an operator's mouth. In describing the AMOA position, Craig Johnson explained the program as a 5, 10, 15, or even 20-year program. The reason: operators know that manufacturers can't scrap their present inventories. Frank Ballouz, whose Nintendo may have the toughest time conforming to the standards that are developed, said the company supports the committee's efforts 100 percent. In fact, Dillon, who had just returned from Japan, reported that the AAMA had received a pledge of support from all Japanese manufacturers to at least study the committee's requests. He said a position paper is forthcoming.

Johnson listed the standards that have been adopted so far:

1. All coin-door locks and cash-door locks shall be a standard 7/8-inch barrel.
2. All games shall have a power switch located on the upper lefthand section of the cabinet, except when prohibited by regulatory requirements.
3. All games using electronic sound shall have a volume control located inside the front door, easily accessible and permanently marked.
4. All games and coin mechanisms shall accept Canadian coins or adequately reject them so as not to cause coin jams.
5. All pinballs should utilize the standardized bookkeeping procedure with the same sequence of functions enabling owner/operators to easily access and recall the format for calling up pinball bookkeeping. [This point will be defined further in the future.]
6. All games shall have a handle or handgrip adequate for easy loading of the game onto a two-wheel dollie.

He said the list would grow rapidly as the committee's efforts continue.

It was left to Todd Erickson to inform the audience of some of the specific problems the committee aims to resolve. He named them off in rapid-fire fashion, and although he pronounced them to be "little things," he said, "we put 10 or 20 of these things together, and we end up with a major problem."

Break-ins, he said, seem to be on the rise. He has recommended to several manufacturers that they design the games so that the operator can easily mount a microswitch that would sense a door opening. Die-cast frames that reinforced for drilling if a security bar must be added is another topic on his list. Erickson also proposed an array of self-test switches that would be active during game play.

Overall, the changes that Erickson is suggesting are simple changes that will, among other things, make it a little easier to train new personnel. The time and money saved, he said, will enable an operator to buy 15 percent more equipment, or the equivalent of one new piece a month.

One thing that Erickson stressed, however, was something that the other committees members also took time to mention: namely, that the committee needs operator suggestions to continue its work effectively. As Frank Ballouz told the audience, "You're the front line."

Selecting a computer system: What to consider

Although Dr. Khalil Matta, who teaches management information systems at Notre Dame, explained at the outset that the seminar was intended for beginners, many of the nearly 30 people who remained were not beginners.

In an attempt to "provide a structured methodology for selecting a computer system," Dr. Matta began by listing a number of specific questions a person should ask when shopping for a computer: Do I really need a computer? Why? What kind do I need? How much power do I need? What kind should I buy? Audience members, it turned out, were interested in only the last question.

In all fairness to Dr. Matta, whose presentation many found to be too theoretical, his lecture was perfectly suited to the level of his audience. That is, the operators in the room needed to know what he was telling them. In all fairness to the operators, however, Dr. Matta's lecture presented more questions than it did answers. The operators were looking for answers.

The answers they were looking for were to questions like "How do you go about finding software that's already been established for this business?" Dr. Matta said such software was available from at least one manufacturer in Florida. But he added that there are two kinds of applications software that the operator can use: software customized for the vending industry and "canned" packages that are not customized but are "user-friendly," like *Lotus 1,2,3* or *dbase 3*.

Dr. Matta recommended the canned packages because they offer the user more options than do many of the customized packages that are available. "You don't have to be a computer programmer," he said, to use the canned programs, which are designed for the novice user. Besides, he said, you can adapt such programs to your own specific needs at a much lower cost. "You're gaining on two fronts," he said.

Another question asked of Dr. Matta was "Could an Atari computer be used almost as efficiently as an IBM?" It depends on the application, Dr. Matta said. But, he pointed out, companies like IBM are the standards in the business. "I know when I call them," he said, "they're going to be there." He said maintenance contracts, warranties, and support services are extremely important.

At least one operator in the audience insisted on more specific information. "We need somebody to tell us what to buy," he said. "I know you don't want to, but I've spent five years and $15,000 and never got one report out of my computer."

Although Dr. Matta stood firm on his earlier assertions that each operator should consider his own specific needs when buying a computer system, he did relent and give some guarded advice. He said that, from what he has seen of the amusement and vending business, a small operator probably shouldn't buy anything larger than a microcomputer. That operator probably needs a hard disk between 10 and 40 megabytes. The brand of computer, he said, is of the least importance. IBM, Compaq, Tandy, and Apple were among those he thought would be suitable.

In terms of software, he said a data-base file-management system would probably suffice. A spread sheet might be needed, he said, and if the operator sends letters to his customers, he needs a word-processing package.

At that point, he said, the operator should send a few of his employees to learn how to access the software packages he has chosen.

When one operator suggested that she couldn't learn the software packages he mentioned, Dr. Matta replied: "Every summer, I teach spread sheets, data base, and word processing in one week to nuns that are, average age, around 48. If nuns can learn that in one week, I'm sure everybody in this room can learn how to manipulate a file-management [or] a word-processing [program]."

Dart leagues: A stable source of income

When Tami Paulsen, of C & N Sales in Mankato, Minn., addressed the audience of operators with the question "Why do we all have leagues?" she didn't save her best answer for last. "The bottom line," she said right away, "is definitely revenues: what's in the cash box." It was a sentiment that echoed about the West Tower meeting room for almost two hours, and two of the speakers that followed Paulsen--Gary Nelson, of Stansfield Vending in LaCrosse, Wisc., and Warren Kelley, a well-known pool and dart consultant--weren't afraid to grab that notion on the rebound and throw it back at the audience, sometimes more forcefully than Paulsen did.

League play, according to Paulsen, has enabled C & N Sales to add some 250 dart machines to its route in the past three years. Other benefits, she said, range from improved relationships with locations to free publicity to guaranteed ownership of your equipment.

The biggest benefit, of course, is the increase in revenues. It's "dramatic," she said, and, perhaps more important, it's stable. C & N, she said, has recorded per-week increases of 30 percent each year. She explained that dart games, without leagues, are like videos: they have a half-life, as it were, and they die after a certain point. Leagues, however, add a factor to the game that sustains player interest and turns the machines into a steady source of income for the operator. You can count on them "week after week after week," she said.

Nelson, whom Paulsen touted as "one of the leading authorities on league promotions in the country," presented a nuts-and-bolts mini-course on how to organize leagues. He covered so much ground so thoroughly that those who heard him speak may well have attended the most instructive of all the seminars at the show.

The first thing an operator should do in organizing a league, Nelson said, is to pick a geographical area. In rural areas, where the operator may have to bring several communities together, he advised keeping it so that players would have to drive no more than 15 miles or so to get to the league. Often, he said, it's a school district that makes up a community.

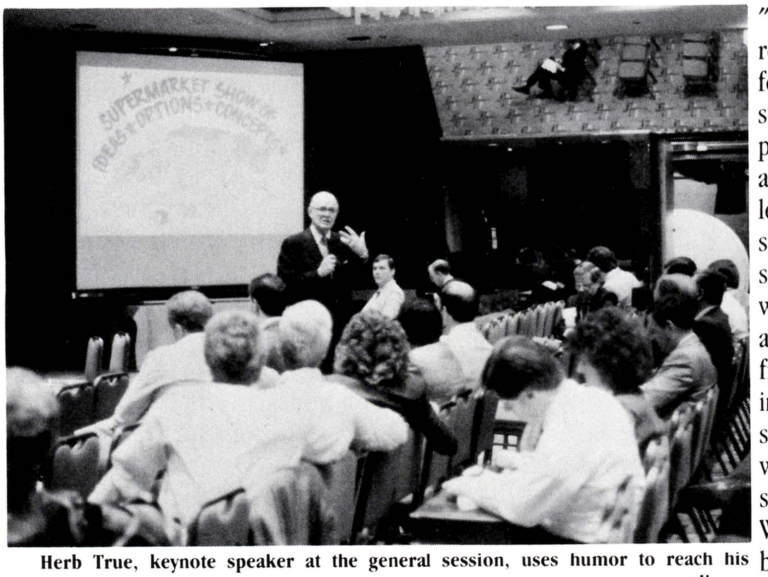
The next step is to organize a location owners' meeting. Running that meeting properly may be easier said than done, but it is necessary, Nelson said, because "the tavern owner is the first person you have to sell on the concept" of league play. The meeting, however, is much more than an exercise in salesmanship. The operator must also see to it that many of the logistics of league play are taken care of at this point.

The operator should arrange a players' meeting about a week before the start of league play and should get out to the locations on the first night to field any questions the players may have. It's important to get the standings out on time and, if possible, to get media coverage.

Nelson admitted that starting up a league is a lot of

work, but after a few years, he said, "you'll see the difference in your cash boxes that you won't believe."

Ed Schultz, the chairman of the AMOA National Dart Association, alluded to the opportunities associated with leagues when he pointed out that there are approximately 50,000 dart machines on location in the United States, a figure many expect to double in the next two years. He also explained that many of the benefits of membership in the AMOA dart association stem from the fact that the dart association was modeled after the successful Valley National Eightball Association, whose structure accommodates league play.



Herb True, keynote speaker at the general session, uses humor to reach his audience

Warren Kelley, who set up the VNEA and is a consultant for the AMOA dart association, took the microphone after Schultz. Although he did survey some of the same ground covered by earlier speakers, he sometimes approached it from a different direction. He spoke of "location loyalty," for example, explaining that 63 percent of league players spend all of their dart-throwing time in their home locations after the season ends.

Kelley also hammered away, convincingly, at the benefits of membership in a national association. "A national association," he said, "establishes your game as a legitimate and competitive activity." It tells the players and the locations, he said, that the league is an ongoing thing. It gives the players a shot at national recognition. He pointed out that, with darts going international, the competitive aspect is gaining even more meaning.

Kirk McKennon, the AMOA dart tournament director, was the principal speaker to address what turned out to be a small gathering of distributors. He explained that the purpose of the AMOA National Dart Association was to standardize things like rules, score sheets, and player rankings and to take players from city and state championships to national and international championships.

McKennon stressed that, thanks largely to well-organized league play, dart games are no longer "boomerang games" that return to the distributor a few weeks after they're sold. In fact, he said, it's phenomena like national associations and successful leagues that are creating sales for distributors. He suggested that distributors who join the AMOA dart association are "fueling the fire that is handing out information...to create more successful leagues," which will in turn create more sales for the distributor. Warren Kelley spoke briefly, urging the distributors to join the association.

McKennon also explained the association's "composite dart average" classification system and its "dart spot" handicap system.

Pay phones: What a difference a year makes'

According to moderator Phil Eisenberg, the two speakers for the pay-phone seminar, Marty Segal and Richard George, have kept him out of the telephone business for the last few years.

"Every time I've listened to them," he said, "I thought, this is not the time, this is not the time." It's Eisenberg's opinion, however, that things have changed: "I would say that the proper subject for today's [seminar] would be 'What a difference a year makes!' because they both tell me, this is the time." In fact, both speakers were optimistic about the future of the private pay-phone, a future that, judging from what they had to say, has already begun.

This optimism seems to be based on the emergence of a third generation of pay phones that are considerably better than the phones that were on the streets just twelve months ago as well as on changes in the industry that have opened new markets to the operator.

Segal--president and CEO of Republic Vending Corporation, of Chicago, and executive vice-president of Republic Pay Phone Corporation (with 1,600 pay phones, one of the largest pay-phone companies in the

country)--presented a clear picture of the state of the industry and, in the process, a checklist of the things an operator should consider as he enters the pay-phone scene.

One of the first things an operator should review before buying into the market is the set of rules and regulations that are particular to his state. [When the FCC deregulated the coin-telephone industry two and a half years ago, it left determination of those rules and regulations up to each of the 50 states.] He should also consider some specifics about the particular phone and its location. Is it indoor or outdoor? What do the previous revenue reports show? Safety factors, noise levels, the location itself, power source, and type of enclosure are among other things to consider.

Typical pay-phone locations include airports, hotel/motel chains, convenience stores, military bases, colleges and universities, and restaurants and service stations. Segal, whom George called the "guru of the pay-phone business," made it clear that the best way to decide which phones to buy and what locations will be profitable is to try them yourself, watch people use them on location, ask the location owner how the phone is working, and check with your state association.

He explained that there are, essentially, two types of phone: "dumb" phones and "smart" phones. Dumb phones--those used by Bell--are called "dumb" because they depend on a central office computer for answer supervision and detection (whether the caller got an answer, a busy signal, or no answer) and a rate structure. Smart phones, which do these things on their own, have gotten bad press because the accuracy of their answer supervision, at somewhere around 97 percent, does not compare favorably with that of the Bell phones, which is said to be 99.7 percent. Segal said manufacturers are working to close the gap.

Pay phones can be further subdivided into post-pay, pre-pay, or push-to-talk phones. Segal stressed that although each has its advantages, it can be a liability if the area public is not familiar with its operation. On November 2, 1984, for example, just one day after Republic had installed its first push-to-talk phones, an angry caller tore one of the phones off the wall because, apparently, he didn't understand that he had to push a button to activate the mouthpiece.

Segal said that there are 1.8 million pay phones in the United States, with between 80,000 and 120,000 private pay phones installed in the past two years. Growth possibilities, however, exist in peripheral areas, too. He is considering, for example, selling service such as directory assistance to large corporations. One area that he feels is going to be "a real big industry" is advertising. With cigarette ads soon to be prohibited from magazines, ad panels on booths and enclosures promise to bring the pay-phone owner considerable sums of money.

In Segal's opinion, operators can expect tariffs to improve when more state associations challenge the public service commissions. he said the tariffs are "not written in stone." Operators can also expect to see an increasing number of coin phones replaced with credit-card phones.

One indication of the private pay-phone industry's gaining strength is that AT&T "a giant and a leader" has just signed a trial agreement giving Republic a percentage on credit-card calls. "It means that we're here to stay," Segal said, "and [that] they think we're here to stay."

George, president of Roy George Music and Vending, of Painesville, Ohio, and director of Phone Tel Systems, of Cleveland, shared virtually all of Segal's opinions, from the brightness of the industry's prospects to the value of strong state associations. He pointed out that the 78,000 pay phones in Ohio generate $205 million a year in coin revenues alone. Some are forecasting a 24-percent growth over the next six years.

But George sees even bigger numbers in credit-card revenues. Calling coin revenues "peanuts," he explained that the credit-card market accounts for $6.5-7 million annually. Long-distance credit-card calls, he suggested, are "where it's happening." George said: "You can make a living on coin-in-the-box pay phone revenue, but it's a long dollar. You're looking at 15, 20, 24-month amortization on your investment. Getting into this long-distance revenue is definitely the shortcut."

A second-generation coin-machine operator, George sees the pay phone as the ultimate vending machine. He reeled off a litany of advantages the pay phone has over other vending machines, among them total public accessibility, prominent display, universal demand, and no moving expenses. But he told the audience that operating profitably hinged on four things: securing quality locations; purchasing reliable, reasonably priced equipment; giving prompt and efficient service; and having accountable collection procedures.

George, however, had a warning for operators. "This business," he said, "requires a serious financial commitment." Explaining that the pay-phone industry is "extremely capital-intensive," he encouraged operators who are unwilling to make long-range commitments to reconsider entering the market.

Billboard TOP TEN

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HOT 100

	TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1.	WALK LIKE AN EGYPTIAN	BANGLES COLUMBIA 38-06257
2.	THE WAY IT IS	BRUCE HORNSBY & THE RANGE RCA 5023
3.	EVERYBODY HAVE FUN TONIGHT	WANG CHUNG GEFFEN 7-28562/WARNER BROS.
4.	NOTORIOUS	DURAN DURAN CAPITOL 5648
5.	SHAKE YOU DOWN	GREGORY ABBOTT COLUMBIA 38-06191
6.	TO BE A LOVER	BILLY IDOL CHRYSALIS 43024
7.	HIP TO BE SQUARE	HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS CHRYSALIS 43065
8.	C'EST LA VIE	ROBBIE NEVIL MANHATTAN 50047/EMI-AMERICA
9.	STAND BY ME	BEN E. KING ATLANTIC 7-89361
10.	THE NEXT TIME I FALL	PETER CETERA WITH AMY GRANT WARNER BROS. 7-28597

ADULT CONTEMPORARY

	TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1.	LOVE IS FOREVER	BILLY OCEAN JIVE 1-9540/ARISTA
2.	THE WAY IT IS	BRUCE HORNSBY & THE RANGE RCA 5023
3.	FALLING IN LOVE (UH-OH)	MIAMI SOUND MACHINE EPIC 34-06352
4.	THIS IS THE TIME	BILLY JOEL COLUMBIA 38-06526
5.	LOVE WILL CONQUER ALL	LIONEL RICHIE MOTOWN 1866
6.	STAY THE NIGHT	BENJAMIN ORR ELEKTRA 7-69506
7.	THE NEXT TIME I FALL	PETER CETERA WITH AMY GRANT WARNER BROS. 7-28597
8.	SHAKE YOU DOWN	GREGORY ABBOTT COLUMBIA 38-06191
9.	HUMAN	THE HUMAN LEAGUE VIRGIN 2861/A&M
10.	STAND BY ME	BEN E. KING ATLANTIC 7-89361

COUNTRY

	TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1.	TOO MUCH IS NOT ENOUGH	BELLAMY BROTHERS WITH THE FORESTER SISTERS MCA/CURB 52917/MCA
2.	MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS	HANK WILLIAMS, JR. WARNER/CURB 7-28581/WARNER BROS.
3.	GIVE ME WINGS	MICHAEL JOHNSON RCA 14412
4.	LOVE'S GONNA GET YOU SOMEDAY	RICKY SKAGGS EPIC 34-06327
5.	WHAT AM I GONNA DO ABOUT YOU	REBA MCENTIRE MCA 52922
6.	CRY MYSELF TO SLEEP	THE JUDDS RCA/CURB 5000-7/RCA
7.	THEN IT'S LOVE	DON WILLIAMS CAPITOL 5638
8.	FALLIN' FOR YOU FOR YEARS	CONWAY TWITTY WARNER BROS. 7-28577
9.	HALF PAST FOREVER (TILL I'M BLUE IN THE HEART)	T.G. SHEPPARD COLUMBIA 38-06347
10.	WALK THE WAY THE WIND BLOWS	KATHY MATTEA MERCURY 884 978-7/POLYGRAM

DANCE DISCO

	TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1.	CONTROL (REMIX)	JANET JACKSON A&M SP-12209
2.	MUSIQUE NON STOP	KRAFTWERK WARNER BROS. 0-20549
3.	BRAND NEW LOVER	DEAD OR ALIVE EPIC 49-05965
4.	EVERYBODY HAVE FUN TONIGHT (REMIX)	WANG CHUNG GEFFEN 0-20551/WARNER BROS.
5.	BIZARRE LOVE TRIANGLE (REMIX)/STATE OF THE NATION (REMIX)	NEW ORDER QWEST 0-20546/WARNER BROS.
6.	SOMEONE LIKE YOU	SYLVESTER MEGATONE/WARNER BROS. 0-20548/WARNER BROS.
7.	GOLDMINE (REMIX)/SEXUAL POWER	THE POINTER SISTERS RCA 5774-1-RD
8.	MISUNDERSTANDING	JAMES (D TRAIN) WILLIAMS COLUMBIA 44-05967
9.	ONCE IN A LIFETIME GROOVE (REMIX)	NEW EDITION MCA 23692
10.	EVERY LOVER'S SIGN (REMIX)	THE LOVER SPEAKS A&M SP-12208

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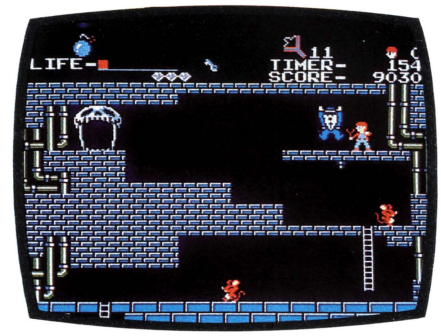

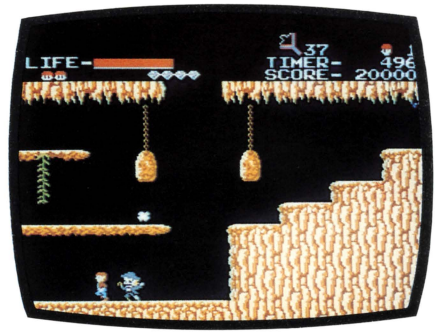

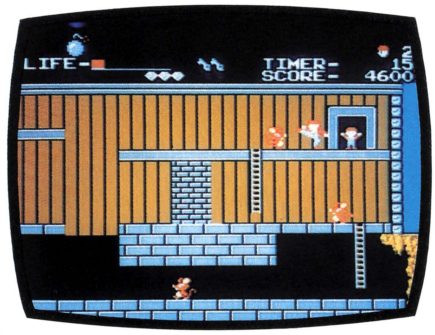

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Spanish Expo the best ever

BY DAVID SNOOK

The Spaniards have finished squabbling at last! After years of being dogged by on-again/off-again legislation and internal strife, Spain unveiled at last united at "simpatico" Feria Espanola del Recreativo, or FER for short, in Barcelona from November 13-15.

The Spanish organizers demonstrated just what they could do if given the undivided attention and cooperation of its fabulously wealthy industry. The layout was precise and the standard of displays lavish. Most observers agreed that, FER ranked with other major coin-machine shows around the world.

The basis of Spanish wealth is slot machines. In the early 1980s, the Spanish government, or successive governments, proposed legislation legalizing slots only to have it overturned by their rivals after the next election. Chaos in the coin-machine industry reigned.

At its height, however, Spain boasted as many as 250 slots manufacturers all tilting for a potential market estimated to be 250,000 strong. Video games, pool tables, jukeboxes, and pinball all got left behind in the mad scramble that followed. The fun was hyped by the fact that operators were permitted to share the takes of machines with site-owners, while the fabulous returns from the machines meant that manufacturers could sell them for four to five times what their colleagues could charge in neighboring countries.

The pioneers of pool in Spain, the British Hazel Grove Music, with directors (from left) John Sissons, Stan McKenna and Barrie Denton with Maria Rosa..

When it collapsed, it did so spectacularly. The clamps came in overnight; factories were closed, around 30,000 employees were sacked; and the market was reduced from 150,000 (which is probably all that the business had managed to service up to that time) to nothing.

Bitter recriminations echoed around the Spanish industry. Operators blamed each other for greed, and everyone blamed the manufacturers. Even the trade associations found themselves divided. And video games came back into favor, limply, because their performance was a pale shadow of the slots.

Then another Spanish government, mindful of unemployment statistics and grasping for taxes, legalized slots again. That was two years ago. Then there were two years of bitter feuding between the manufacturers association, FACOMARE, and the independent company which had hitherto organized the Spanish exhibitions, Interalia S.A. It took five years before everything got sorted out.

In 1986 there was a unified show, sponsored by FACOMARE and organized by Interalia. And to be fair to both organizations, it was an excellent job.

By the end of 1985 there were 13,294 operators in Spain, the majority having very small organizations. However only (if that is the correct word!) 9,200 of the certificates required by operators were actually being used.

Spain now has three classifications for its coin machines: A is amusement only, of the video and pinball type; B, slots with a maximum payout of 500 pesetas ($2); and C, casino slots with much higher payouts. A license fee of 125,000 pesetas (about $1,000) is payable for a Type B machine per year, with an additional fiscal tax of 10,000 pesetas ($80). A license of only $50 is required for a Type A machine, and there are strict laws forbidding minors under 18 years old from playing slots.

In this way, Spain has settled down to a comfortable, highly profitable business in which the government earns handsomely, and the trade itself can hardly plead poverty.

The 1986 FER was the largest coin-machine show ever to be held in Spain, with a 50 percent increase in space over the 1985 figures. Children were not permitted until the final afternoon of the show, but up to that point were provided with two temporary arcades full of video games to keep them quiet.

To the observer from a country with legalized slots, the Spanish machines tended to be a little innocent in their simplicity. This is explained by manufacturers as being a matter of preference by the Spanish population. Total production for the Spanish slots market is now hitting 125,000 per year.

The largest manufacturers are Cirsa S.A. and Franco S.A., both of which claim outputs of hundreds of machines each day.

But other games do find a place in

Fred Van de Kok of the Dutch company, Jac Van Ham, points to the black knob at the side of Peyper S.A.'s Wolf Man pinball, which enables the player to move the playfield.

Jack Jones (right) and Philip Walters of JPM, the largest British Slot manufacturer, keep a watch over the show although import duties make sales to Spain prohibitive.

Here's an example of a typical Spanish slot machine, very simple and straightforward, built by Cirsa S.A.

Spain's modern market, now that it has settled down to a level of equanimity. Pinball is still popular: Williams' *Space Shuttle* is still one of the top games in Spain. Many games are built under license in Spain, so manufacturers' names, such as *Unidesa* (*High Speed*), *OET* (*Pinball Champ*), *Ocer SL* (*Raven*), and *Sonic* (*Gamatron*) may seem unfamiliar to Americans.

Jukeboxes are undistinguished in Spain. Maibesa S.A. showed Seeburg's *LaserMusic*, while Sega had a video jukebox and Automatica S.A. gave space to the Wurlitzer *SL600* and *SL800*. But most of Spain's bars are too small to hold a conventional jukebox, and background music is popular.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of the video games section was the wide variety of cabinets displayed from an even wider range of manufacturers. Joctronic, which also manufactures pinball, and Submatic had particularly good displays of operator and technician-conscious cabinets.

Strangely, Sega's *Out Run* was not at the show, a fact capitalized upon by Konami with its fiercely competitive *Wec LeMans*, which could therefore be referred to as the star of the show.

In the past couple of years pool has started to take off in a major way in Spain, and at the forefront is the big British manufacturer Hazel Grove Music, which has 90 percent of its own home market neatly tied up.

Now the organizers are working on next year's FER, due to be held again in Barcelona, November 12-14. If they improve on this year's show, and provided the law leaves them alone, 1987 and its Spanish show will be one to see.

David Snook is the editor of England's Coin Slot, an industry trade journal.

Denis Hunt (center) of Glendale Automatics, the Welsh company which has made an impact on the world novelties market with its parrot vender is pictured with Joe Corley (left) and his brother Ronald, of Costa Connections.

A star attraction at the show was twin sisters Jani and Teri Domingo Arcas, shown here with *the Bingo Star* slot machine.

FRANK'S CRANKS

AMOA Show Looking Good

by Frank "The Crank" Seninsky

As in the pre-video boom days of the late 1970's, this year's AMOA show in Chicago saw confident operators. Few complained about business or cried of poverty. Distributors shopped carefully before ordering. Manufacturers proudly displayed new product. Harmony and cooperation reigned. These were signs of a stable industry with good times ahead.

HOT NUMBERS

Cranes

Twenty-four different crane manufacturers exhibited, reminding me of pay phones one year ago. Most of the crane makers will be history in a year. Here are what I feel are the top few--Betson's *Big Choice*, still on top; UAI's *Triple Way*; and Smart Industries' *Bear Claw*. The Bonori (Italian) crane also looked good.

Regarding crane approval, if you want to operate cranes for many years to come, call Bob Snyder of Bob Snyder & Associates, an expert with an excellent track record. New Jersey shore arcades have been using cranes legally for 25 years. Don't believe the rumors of legality that are on the street.

Dedicated Games

Sega's *Out Run* (built by Dynamo) was the all-around show favorite. Upon a crash, the vibrating steering wheel makes the upright model a special attraction. Production models will have a hardened control panel bezel in place of the soft plastic one shown. The addition of a four-inch metal strip molding to the bottom base front is much appreciated.

Cinematronics' *Danger Zone* gets my nod as an excellent attraction piece for a large gameroom or arcade. I'm going to test one to make sure the monitor pivots and the control handles hold up.

Konami's *WEC Le Mans 24* looked great and was probably the better liked of the two new driving games at both the Japan show and the AMOA. However, I don't feel it is engineered for the ultra-tough U.S. market.

Atari's *720 Degrees* skateboard game attracted crowds, but I'm going light on this one. I was disappointed that it's not a System II kit.

System Software

1) Sente *Night Stocker*--the concept of driving and shooting a gun appeals to all kids and adults (former kids). 2) Nintendo's *Play Choice 10* with five more games. I'm doing extremely well with this one in street locations and gamerooms. 3) Tecmo's *Rygar*, if it's for the Nintendo VS. System. 4) Any decent Nintendo VS. game. How can an operator complain about the VS. System games when the low price makes most of them a bargain.

Conversions

These are difficult to choose from, so I'll list some of the favorites, but not in any particular order: 1)Konami's *Life Force* (vertical) with buy-in feature. 2)Data East's *Last Mission*. 3) Romstar's *Bubble Bobble* (horizontal), now number two in Japan, a game popular with kids 10 and under plus non-video playing moms and dads; also *Side Arms*, a two-player game that's a bit too difficult for the U.S. market but possibly good in very skilled locations. 4) Merit's *Match 'em Up*, heavily played by women at the show; 5) Cinematronics' *Red Line Racer*, a two-player driving game for any vertical raster game with an overhang at the cabinet bottom (like *Dig Dug* or *Centipede*). The overhang is needed for two gas pedals. It also is available as a system kit for the Cinemat System.

I heard mention of an *Ikari Warriors* kit. I would buy it.

Countertops

Merit has a "mini" that's excellent for *Arkanoid*, and *Big Event Golf* kits. The monitor can be flipped for vertical or horizontal games.

Cinematronics has a countertop for *World Series* and *Alley Master*.

Pinball

Pin Bot is another winner for Williams, and Premier's *Gold Wings* looks strong. Most operators should buy both.

Rotary Merchandisers

Century Vending demonstrated its six-player rotary that is a super earner for large arcades and theme parks. Betson has a single player rotary that street operators could use to go side by side with cranes. It also will be available as a countertop. The quality is tops because it's made by *Big Choice* crane manufacturer Verstraten in Belgium.

AMOA Post

First, I want to thank the New Jersey AMOA board for nominating me for the AMOA board of directors; and second, the AMOA board for electing me to this important industry position. Directors John Estridge, Dick Hawkins, Al Marsh, Vinnie Storino, Fred Collins, Jim Hayes, Randy Chilton, Bill LaHart and others spent a lot of time helping me along and keeping me informed

Operators gather at the Century Vending booth to learn features of the six-player rotary merchandiser.

about AMOA activities. And I'm not an easy guy to convince on any subject! I like to poke holes and make certain before taking on bold projects with long term commitments. I hope to immediately reach operators through my writings in the trade press and get important AMOA industry issues to move along at a faster than normal pace.

My goal has always been to bring manufacturers, distributors and operators closer together so this industry can run smoothly, profitably and proudly. Now, if I can only get more of you to take an active part.

As an AMOA board member, I now have direct input into the AMOA seminar program, which needs more technical seminars. I will try to get a crane repairing and adjusting session together as well as one on quick-fixing particular hot games. Those of you who would like to help, now is your chance. I'm asking! If you are shy (as I was and still am) about speaking to a group, it can be set up so others will be up there with you. If you know your stuff, believe me, the operators will intently listen.

I will continue to criticize manufacturers so they will produce better made products. Almost everyone now accepts this criticism in the manner intended. It's not to be taken personally. I will try hard to retain the industry respect you have entrusted to me, and will continue to say what I feel on any industry topic. I'm going to help AMOA take on additional areas so more and more operators will immediately see the benefits of joining AMOA. Together, AMOA and AAMA are going to lead this industry to a very powerful and respected position in this country.

If you have any comments on future AMOA seminars, I can be reached at Alpha-Omega Amusements and Sales, 6 Sutton Place, Edison, NJ 08837, (201) 287-4990. As always, keep cranking.

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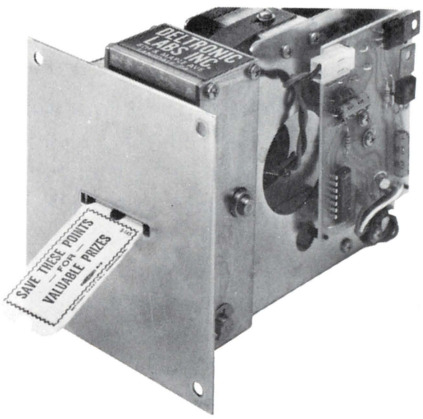

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CRITIC'S CORNER

WINTER WINDFALLS

BY ROGER C. SHARPE

Now that the excitement and hype of AMOA has waned a bit, it's time to take stock of what is available-how it fits into your location and your clientle. Much has already been said about the 'winners' of the show, but the industry has never been made up exclusively of hits. There are some borderline machines that deserve their due and in the next few issues I'll be trying to wrap everything up to give you a full perspective of what's happening not only in video and pinball machines,but also other coin-op attractions.

There are really two ways to go with a column such as this: play safe and cover the winners for the high visibility of such an undertaking, or go after the also-rans in the hope of gaining any necessary credibility. Well,since I've been doing this type of thing for more than a decade, I think I've found that balance is always best and this time around is no different.

There are machines that you should be getting on location-come hell or high water-as quickly as you can; but, in addition,there are other games that might be worth the risk for the next few months. I prefer to go after what I'll call "the leaners", machines that might be just this side of borderline attractive. The hits will take care of themselves, but you'll also read about some of the questions I have regarding a couple of them.

Konami's *WEC LEMANS 24*

Everyone has talked about Sega's *OutRun*, which is an exciting piece, but Konami's effort has a lot going for it as well. In fact, Konami appears to have turned a corner (no pun intended) with this AMOA. The company had some solid efforts on display and even went into a licensing arrangement with Nintendo for *Gradius* and *Goonies* on the VS System.

PLAY:Although Konami introduced its Konami GT driving game earlier in 1986, this new WEC Le Mans 24 model has much more to offer in terms of a driving simulation. There are three cabinet styles to choose from including the company's "spin type", 'mini-spin' and upright. As for controls, players must manipulate a brake, accelerator, gear shift and steering wheel. In terms of game play, this machine brings back memories, for me, of a classic home game cartridge from Activision called *Enduro*. The race on screen is a 24-hour marathon endurance race based on a course that Konami states has been approved by the Automobile Club De L'Ouest (A.C.O.). With so much realism on screen, it seems only natural that Konami would develop controls that approximate the actual driving experience.

Players will find the challenge of a counter-steering force while they play, as well as spinning and bouncing in the sit-down versions. The race is solid with good visuals and excellent sound effects to complete the package.

Which came first is really not the issue, but rather which is the better game for a given location. Without knowing the price parameters, the real dilemma might boil down to dollars and cents for an operator since it doesn't make total sense to take both machines in.

ANALYSIS: Where the choice heats up is the question of space. Obviously, we're talking about an attraction for arcades and not

Konami's *WEC Le Mans 24* takes the player on a 24-hour world endurance championship race.

street locations for the spin models. In terms of an upright, the question is whether WEC Le Mans 24 can bring in substantial earnings compared to a Pole Position or Monaco GP. Driving games have always been strong and with technological advances we are getting closer to a more simulated environment where the player can experience some of 'gives and takes' of real driving.

This alone counts for a great deal and is probably just the beginning of what we'll be seeing more of in the future. As for Konami's effort here, I think the game has real potential, especially if the price point is competitive with, or under, that of *Out Run*. The package is attractive and definitely eye-catching and should prove to be a steady performer which is going to be necessary to bring back the return on the initial investment.

RATING: We have entered into a new coin-op realm and price becomes a critical issue that can't be ignored. Many of the newest attractions are going to price some operators out of the park before they can even get started-especially if an operator is used to buying his equipment outright. However, for those who are working on splits with their distributors, Konami's WEC Le Mans 24 should prove to be a good addition to a game room looking to fill in with hot, new products. We'll go with a solid ### on this effort from Konami.

Bally/Midway's Strange Science

Although this pinball machine did win an honor at the AMOA as the best pin, it was overshadowed a bit by the hype surrounding Williams' Pin-Bot. But you have to give Bally a lot of credit for sticking with pinball and trying out different approaches in design and creative execution. Bally attempted a game based on time (Beat the Clock); *Cybernaut*, with its partially tilted playfield; and *Motordome* that introduced playfield ramps (which unfortunately blocked out most of the board) and player's skill level option, *Black Belt* had upfield flipper action and cross-over ramp play and *Lady Luck* attempted to bring today's player a basic symmetrical playfield and sequenced action.

Special Force, which premiered in early fall, was the bridge back for Bally. Now comes another plateau with the inventive and 'loaded' playfield of *Strange Science*.

PLAYFIELD: *Strange Science* introduces some new concepts to pinball, beginning with a dual level lane change on top (L-A-B) where precision shooting off the plunger can keep the ball in this area. There are three switches on top for activating a letter as well as three lanes through which the ball can drop down into. Just below is a three thumper bumper area, although the major move is to rebound off the left thumper bumper and propel the ball around to the left of center and down to a flipper.

From this point the object is to hit the ball up and over to the far left and have enough velocity and accuracy so that the ball can make it into the "atom smasher" multi-ball chamber. In the center of the playfield is an interesting twist of clear plastic, along with some blue tint that marks the "anti-gravity" area where the ball can go up and back down, around and upward to a center lane.

Meanwhile the main targets on either side include a three target bank on the left for spotting (S-T-R-A-N-G-E) and a complementary three bank on the right for spelling out (S-C-I-E-N-C-E). On the outside extreme edges of the board are two roll down lanes which build up their own point values and lead down to the flippers via a kick-out hole on the right and a straight roll down from the left.

The flipper set up has been modified a bit on the left with what I'll call freestanding lanes down and straight kickers just in front, so there can be some damaging drains. However, on the left, Bally has brought into play a "power saver" which can "bounce" back the ball into play via a second flipper button on the cabinet.

ANALYSIS: Playing left me befuddled as to my primary objectives on the machine. I understood the spelling out of the words through the targets and even the bonus multiplier through the top lanes and switches, but many of the shots were extremes in order to get balls locked up or trying to return back to the top from the left flipper and up the right side. The elevated areas on the board provided some extra power from the flippers, but the main area is that center lane, which usually can spell death for the skilled player, who always shies away from a straight up-and-down sequence.

There are a lot of bells and whistles along with falshing lights; the ability to collect bonus via that lower right kick-out hole; and even the opportunity to release captive balls before their time. The latter can be done with a solid shot directly to the bottom of the chamber just to the left of the three bank on the left side.

Bally Midway's *Strange Science* received much operator play at AMOA.

With enough power, any ball (or balls) can be propelled back up the chamber and out to a waiting cross-over track that will dump the balls over on the right side and into instant multi-ball play.

However, the major appeal of the game appears to be the opportunity to get five balls into play simultaneously with an interesting delay in action and a countdown of time so that the player is ready for the onslaught as the balls are released straight down to the flipper area.

GRAPHICS: *Strange Science* is almost overwhelming with all of its visual elements. The playfield is bright and crowded and it's easy to lose sight of the graphic elements and overlays. The backglass does manage to convey the central theme and is ably supported by the use of a top light effect on the back box.

PLAY: The setting of levels on *Strange Science* is going to be a hit or miss situation since the game does tend to play in extremes. However, for three ball play in extra ball areas you might want to try two settings that begin with about 800,000 points and end with 1,600,000. On free play settings, you should be okay with an increase of anywhere from 200,000 to 400,000 points added on to each limit. This all depends, of course, on how

you want your percentaging to go and the caliber of your players. With *Strange Science*, since there is so much to digest in terms of a player getting used to the game, you might want to start out on the low side as an extra incentive and then increase the limits when your audience has become more familiar with the game.

PROS & CONS: I give Bally a great deal of credit for bringing out *Strange Science* and pass along similar kudos to Dan Langlois who designed the machine. Bally needed something out of the ordinary to generate excitement and *Strange Science* might just do this. However, there are some issues with the game that can't be ignored. First and foremost is going to be the mechanical reliability of parts, especially flippers, and whether they can withstand the constant strain and pain of playing.

It was one of the principle negatives against *Special Forces* since you couldn't make clean shots to most of the upper reaches of the playfield. Hopefully, the problems can be rectified to give *Strance Science* a chance on location.

Second is going to be the reliability of the ball loader at the bottom of the cabinet, since the mechanisim has to stockpile up to five balls and still work effectively every time out. Admittedly, the prototypes at the show were just that, but a couple of the machines had a problem with this and on the line this will have to be corrected to keep *Strange Science* in the running.

Apart from these major issues, the game has potential to attract the same type of players who liked a layout such as *Comet*. Here we have the same type of flashy accessorizing on the playfield with some very strong visual elements to carry the theme across. Underlying all of this is a game with some basic rules and sequences that must be made in order to get any respectable point totals. *Strange Science* does have this blend for the skilled and novice player. However, there is one point that can't be dismissed because it is at the core of the game.

Hitting into a blind area has never been an enviable trait of any machine, and *Strange Science* has this as a central part of the machine's play. In order to load multi-balls the player must adjust his timing and strength to catch the ball on that top flipper and hit to some unseen area on the top left, hoping that the ball will suddenly reappear in the clear "atom smasher" chamber. And the shot is a real bitch to not only master but to get comfortable with.

And if players are going to the machine just for the multi-ball aspect, they might be disappointed by the degree of difficulty. However, there is more to the game than just getting multi-ball and this will be the potential savior if there is one needed. Much will depend on the caliber of player at a given location and whether they'll spend the necessary time and money to get into the game and try to reach their own level of mastery.

RATING: There are parts of *Strange Science* that I personally like and other minor points that tend to distract from the totality of play. For the masses out there who are gravitating to pinball more and more, *Strange Science* is a game that will test their ability to sustain interest and concentration, not to mention physical strength. Most of the long-range shots are very demanding and fluidity of play isn't like a *Genesis*, for example, where you can get into a definite rhythm.

I'll go with a "leaner" ## 1/2 and see how the masses respond in the months to come.

Capcom's *Speed Rumbler*

Here is a company that has had a real impact during the past couple of years, and at the recent AMOA they showcased a number of new games that cause quite a bit of conversation and interest. This driving/combat game offers some standard entertainment.

There's an overhead perspective and scrolling group of scenes and settings as the player must manuever his car past a variety of obstacles and danger zones. The major objective is to save hostages along the way and to time a button control escape from the vehicle when the action gets too hot.

I just can't get excited by another car/shoot'em up. On the surface it's a throwback to another era and one that today's players aren't going to move to without some extra incentive.

This might be a worthwhile investment for locations looking for staple arcade equipment. I'm willing to risk a # #.

Cinematronics' *Alley Masters*

The game isn't new, having appeared at a couple of conventions, but I still like it and go back to it every chance I get. And now Cinematronics is offering the play action in a countertop cabinet as well, for those bars and taverns that can't find the room for another upright.

All the action and skill are there in controlling the on-screen player. You can have a right-hander, or a left-hander, throw a big sweeping hook or a straight shot down the middle of the lanes. It's joystick controlled and the realism of action is very good for bowlers and non-bowlers alike.

Alley Master is a great head-to-head game for competition and should be in almost every bowling establishment around, much the same way that *Biedie King* should have hit the clubhouses of public and private courses.

The graphics and sound effects are the same quality you've gotten with Cinematronics *World Series*, and *Alley Master* should be one of those games that becomes a standard attraction on location...a slow, steady, not-too-flashy-earner that you can depend upon week after week, month after month. Much of the game's success will depend upon the environment of placement and playing audience.

I'll go with a ### and see if others strike it rich with *Alley Master*.

Operators everywhere should get out on the floor and see what players like and want for their quarters.

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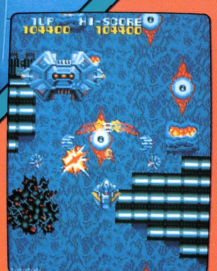
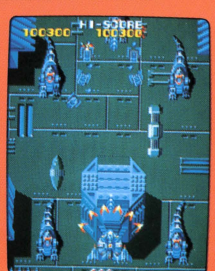


Dimension #2. UFO #2 formation completed.



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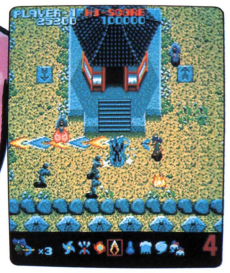

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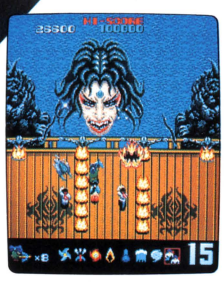

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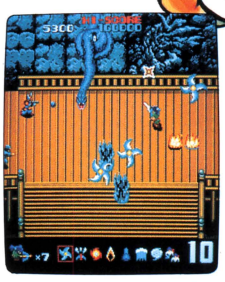

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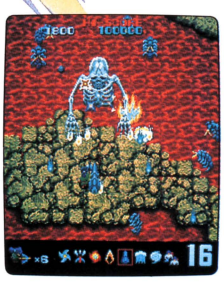

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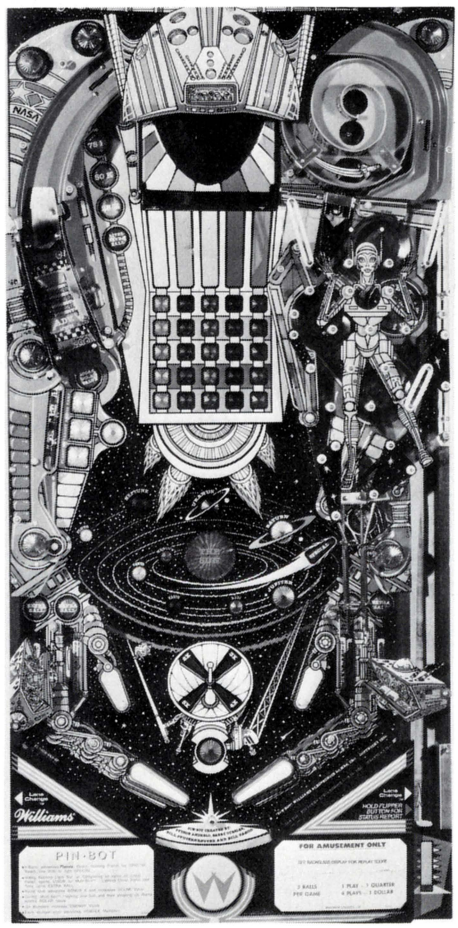
PLAYERS' PICKS

BY: STEVE HARRIS AND THE U.S. NATIONAL VIDEO GAME TEAM/U.S. NATIONAL PINBALL TEAM

Following The Great Pinball Comeback

The coin-operated amusement industry undertook an amazing transformation when the first wave of interactive video games began appearing a decade ago. Spawned by the commercial success of *Space Invaders*, *Galaxian*, and other innovative one-player titles, game companies began to emphasize the significance of this new medium by producing more monitors and fewer flippers. While pin games had remained a staple since the inception of the coin-op industry, an enormous video game industry that relied on joysticks and space battles slowly devoured the marketplace.

The introduction of *Pac-Man* and similar fare created an exodus among pinball players who were mesmerized by the slick graphics and realistic effects the machine offered. Video games were seen by players as a more visual form of entertainment, providing an endless stream of scenarios and reproductions of such popular themes as sports contests and inter-galactic conflict. Video game players also had complete control of their video environments, something that only the very best pinball players could boast.



Pin Bot Playfield

Many prominent pin manufacturers followed the consumers quarters and quickly formed video divisions to develop electronic games domestically. Williams scored a big hit with *Defender*, while Bally rode high on a string of successes. Gottlieb also joined the video game bandwagon with a diversified selection of entries, including *Reactor* and *Mad Planets*. Its big sell, however, occurred when it changed to Mylstar and released *Q*Bert*. It must be noted that pinball production continued at all three factories, albeit at a much slower rate. Other pin companies also materialized to do battle with video, but quickly discovered that the public, including the media, was extremely pro-video games.

Several manufacturers adopted the philosophy that if you can't beat'em, join'em! The result was a number of video/pin hybrids which were neither very good video games nor good pinball games. They were interesting, however, and did manage to get some video players to try pins and

vice-versa.

While the industry was riding high on the wide spread acceptance of the Pac-family, new locations were opening up on a daily basis. Finding a line of video games at the local laundromat or convenience store was not out of the ordinary. Doomsayers quickly predicted a swift death for the pinball machine, heralding video games as the entertainment medium of the future.

In this case doomsayers were wrong. Pinball machines didn't disappear or suffer adversely from the introduction of the video game. In fact, they profited from the stiff competition. Pinball design advanced by leaps and bounds during the video game boom. To reclaim the legions of pinball fanatics that were lost to *Asteroids*, pin games have to be more attractive and interactive then their predecessors. Out of this storm of creativity came a number of innovations that are now standard fare on most of today's new generation of pin releases.

As manufacturers appeared to market their own version of someone else's games, the video game boom went bust. The novelty had worn off these high-tech toys and left players searching for other forms of amusement. Re-Enter the pin game. As video game collections subsided, pinball companies quickly rushed to get back into the development of new and exciting machines.

Now, as 1986 comes to a close and the entire coin-operated industry is on an upswing, we have reached a pinball renaissance. The machines are better than anything ever released, and the public interest in the games is unparalleled.

Robert Berk, that irrepressible pin promoter from Ohio, thrust pinball into the limelight once again when he played host to several hundred game players and collectors at his recent Pinball Expo '86. By combining elements of a trade convention with the thrill of competition, the Pinball Expo has secured a foothold which will insure its success in years to come.

Talk of new pin product was rampant at the recent AMOA Expo, with many of the games receiving more play than their video counterparts. The convention unleashed some of the hottest pinball machines ever seen, including Bally's *Strange Science*, William's *Pin-Bot*, and Premier's *Genesis* and *Gold Wings*. All of these games are solid, entertaining contests that were quite deserving of the attention received. These titles take the concept of a flipper game to the limit with strong, theme-oriented action designed around specific goals.

The formation of the U.S. National Pinball Team serves as an additional reflection of pinball's ever-growing popularity within the playing community. Sanctioned tournaments (like the upcoming U.S. Pinball Open in Los Angeles, January 17-18, 1987), exhibitions, and contributions to this column will be among the team's many activities. And like the U.S. National Video Game Team, the pin team will be on hand at the major industry expos to provide a player's point of view on new products.

Now that pinball has come into its own expect to see more machines being released in 1987. Not only will these new titles be loaded with additional features yet to be invented, but they will undoubtedly be packed with more action and flash then anything ever seen before. Indeed, 1987 looks very bright for the pinball player.

The following game reviews and endorsements represent the opinions of some of the best pinball players in North America. The lineup of new pins is outstanding. Williams Electronics gets an enthusiastic thumbs-up for their latest mega-hit, *Pin-Bot*. This unit displays solid action in a futuristic robot/space theme. *Strange Science*, the new power house from Bally Midway, claimed the title of "Best Pinball Game of the 1986 AMOA" and is being touted by some as the best Bally pin in years. Not to be outdone, Premier is currently serving up an interesting piece called *Gold Wings*. Loosely based on the hit summer movie, "Top Gun," this pin features all of the profitable traditions of previous Premier games.

While each of these pins boast certain features that make them better than others, rest assured that all of these new games are strong and profitable machines that are going to create significant interest wherever they're placed. Check'em out and see if you don't agree with the U.S. National Pinball Team...

Williams Electronics has enjoyed a long and prosperous history, with a team of creative engineers always at work producing the latest innovations in pinball. Multi-ball and multi-level playfields are but a few of the recent contributions that Williams has made to the pin industry.

Throughout the video boom, Williams was one of the few dependable sources of superior pin products. And, more recently, Williams has garnered wide-spread kudos with a string of hits; beginning with *Space Shuttle* and continuing through *Comet*, *High Speed*, and *Road Kings*. The common factor inherent in all of these titles is a combination of better-than-average playfield design and high point shooting incentives. By tieing fast paced pinball action together with a variety of advancing goals, Williams Electronics has been able to serve up a number of enjoyable, high-spirited contests that have consistently drawn more and more players back to pin games.

This same spirit shines through in Williams' latest tour-de-force, *Pin-Bot*. Utilizing a new twist on an old theme, it follows all the profitable examples of previous Williams' entries by incorporating a varied selection of skill shots with an overriding goal that can net skillful players millions.

Pin-Bot features an outer space/robot scenario that serves as a backdrop for the action. The goal of the game follows this theme, challenging players to activate the

robot by locking his "eyes" (the silver) in a special faceplate. Once accomplished, the game offers additional scoring incentives and multi-ball play.

Play begins with an opening skill shot into the vortex, a three tiered spiral that awards incremental scores from 5,000 to 100,000. Vortex power (multiplier) increases with each successive entry into the vortex per ball, with a maximum award of 10X. A trio of bumpers lies below the vortex. Contact with the bumpers increases the energy value can be claimed by striking the energy center below the ramp.

An adjustable target planet sets the destination players must reach for bonus points and specials. Advancing the planetary orbits is achieved several ways: through successfully completing the three-bank of drop targets or by hitting the bullseye near the right drain when lit. Although the bullseye will remain illuminated until it is struck, the three-bank has a time limit which demands quick shooting. Completing the orbits of all nine planets and the sun will light the right bullseye for an additional special.

At the top of the playfield is *Pin-Bot*'s special faceplate which hides two eye ejection holes. To lock the balls, players are first required to expose the dual eye ejectors that are hidden behind the robot's visor. By hitting multi-colored targets arranged in both vertical and horizontal rows of five, it is possible to complete the twenty-five squares which comprise the robot's chestplate. When the grid is filled, the visor actually opens up, with the horizontal row of targets disappearing behind the ball locks!

Capturing the balls results in the simultaneous ejection of both balls. This is where the real high point strategies come into play. Not only are all scores doubled, it is possible to score millions by relocking one ball and firing the second projectile up the ramp to acquire the solar value which is carried from game to game to a maximum of 5,000,000!

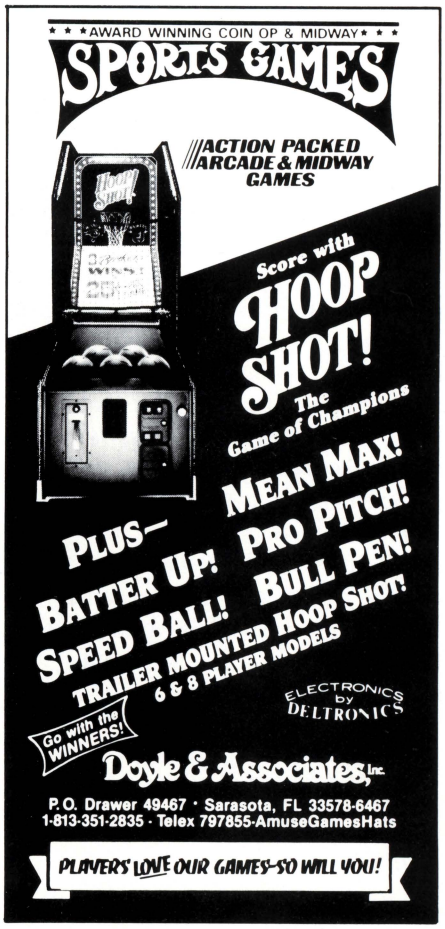
The ramp on the left side of the playfield leads to a second-story pin-board which exits into the thumper-bumpers, the right save lane, or the plunger (increasing the vortex value). Successful ramp shots also advance the score multiplier, up to a maximum of 5X. Hitting any of the lit targets on the three bank raises the ramp for short periods of time to claim the energy value. A variety of other features round out *Pin-Bot's* impressive playfield design and offer players a surplus of targets.

The backglass art of *Pin-Bot* is colorful and involved, a combination of celestial backgrounds as well as an illustration of the Pin-Bot itself. While the corners of the screen depict various planets and other heavenly bodies, the robot stands out with flashing bolts of light and a multi-colored chestplate. Scores and other information also are presented as part of the Pin-Bot character. Hidden surprises lay behind the Pin-Bot's darkened visor, illuminated once certain shots are performed, adding to the game's appeal.

The playfield artwork reinforces the theme, reproducing the Pin-Bot and other backglass characters in various shades of blue and red. Planets and satellites appear on a black starfield and serve as the focal point, each brightly lit when reached. The chestplate grid shares in the playfield attention, pulsating in rhythmic patterns. *Pin-Bot* also has several vocal embellishments that increase the game's playability.

This pin is an excellent example of superior design. By running a common thread throughout all aspects of play, *Pin-Bot* ties a number of separate features together to create a very balanced and enjoyable challenge.

For less experienced players, *Pin-Bot* boasts several innovative touches that are guaranteed to give the consumers their money's worth (an important, but often overlooked morale consideration that is vital in attracting repeat play). Not only does the game allow for one or two minor shakes before tilting (with appropriate



visual and audio cues given), it automatically lights the extra ball lane change if the player's first two balls are lost quickly.

The solar value score carry-over provides proficient players with an incentive to try once again. This bonus retention feature closely approximates the feel forwarded by last year's mega-hit, *Gauntlet*, by cleverly convincing players to try again for even better results.

Pin-Bot is one of those rare games that offers excitement and never ending challenges. Congratulations to Williams for successfully continuing its fine pinball tradition with this sure-shot winner!

Bally Midway's *Strange Science*

Although *Strange Science* received substantial coverage in the last installment of "Players Picks" we felt that its high-powered blend of excitement and skill warranted repeat coverage and a much deserved U.S. National Pinball Team endorsement.

The latest addition to Bally Midway's line of "The Next Trend" pin games, it is nothing short of spectacular. Combining an impressive layout with interesting items such as the atom smasher and the anti-gravity loop, you might think that is simply throwing together some gimmicks to get attention. But don't worry. Like the dirty cover on an old book, initial impressions can be deceiving, and in the case of *Strange Science* opinions such as these couldn't be further from the truth. Those odd items on the playfield provide a sample of the wonderfully weird atmosphere the game evokes.

The game action centers around a mad doctor who, with the use of an atom smasher and some strange science, has set out to give both a monkey friend and a shapely victim an identity crisis by transforming their brain waves. The player interacts within the doc's lab in preparation for the mind scramble.

Several different skill shots confront players at the start of the game. Once the ball enters the playfield it can fall into the laboratory or continue across beside the atom smasher. Completing the L-A-B letters advances the scoring and releases the ball into the thumper-bumpers below. An anti-gravity loop occupies the center of the playfield. If the player shoots with enough power, the ball will be delivered to the top of the screen near the atom smasher. Without proper speed on the shot, however, the ball will drain back into the lower section of the playfield.

Even though *Strange Science* has a playfield packed with a number of targets, the majority of the action is focused around the mysterious atom-smasher that occupies the upper-left portion of the game. Through skillful aim, balls can be stored in the atom smasher with a third flipper placed strategically to the right of the contraption. Once an atom is in place, new balls are entered into play. Captive atoms can be released with a well-placed shot from below (which places additional balls in play one at a time) or by capturing five atoms together. If the latter is accomplished, bonus points are awarded before the game unleashes all five balls at once! Not only does game play become incredibly frenetic, but all scores advance to 20X value! This is one of the hottest incentives to ever appear in a pin game.

Additional innovations include an independent lane-change feature and a power-save button that can kick a drained ball back into play. These enhancements increase the play appeal of *Strange Science* without sacrificing the challenge.

Backglass illustrations help set the mood for the rest of the game. The eerie *Strange Science* title and the diabolical doc overshadow the bewildered ape and his screaming victim. The creepy nature of the game is treated with more humor than horror, however, and the attractive backglass is sure to generate some spontaneous laughter from spectators.

The sound and musical accompaniment of *Strange Science* is truly bizarre. From the voice effects to the electrical explosions to the special audio effects that kick in throughout the course of play, everything is rendered in crisp detail that further supports the theme.

Bally has produced a game that takes a wholly original concept and carries it to the limit. The playfield is of exceptional design and offers a number of unique features that will not only generate initial interest but will stimulate repeat play as well.

Strange Science is the best pinball to appear from Bally in years. The company's upbeat and positive attitude is reflected by this entry that will have players forming lines in coming months. *Strange Science* stands apart from the rest with fine execution and flashy visuals that rival anything currently on the market. Bally gets an A for this one!

Look for a review of Premier's *Gold Wings* in an upcoming column.

PLAY METER ASKS:

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY?

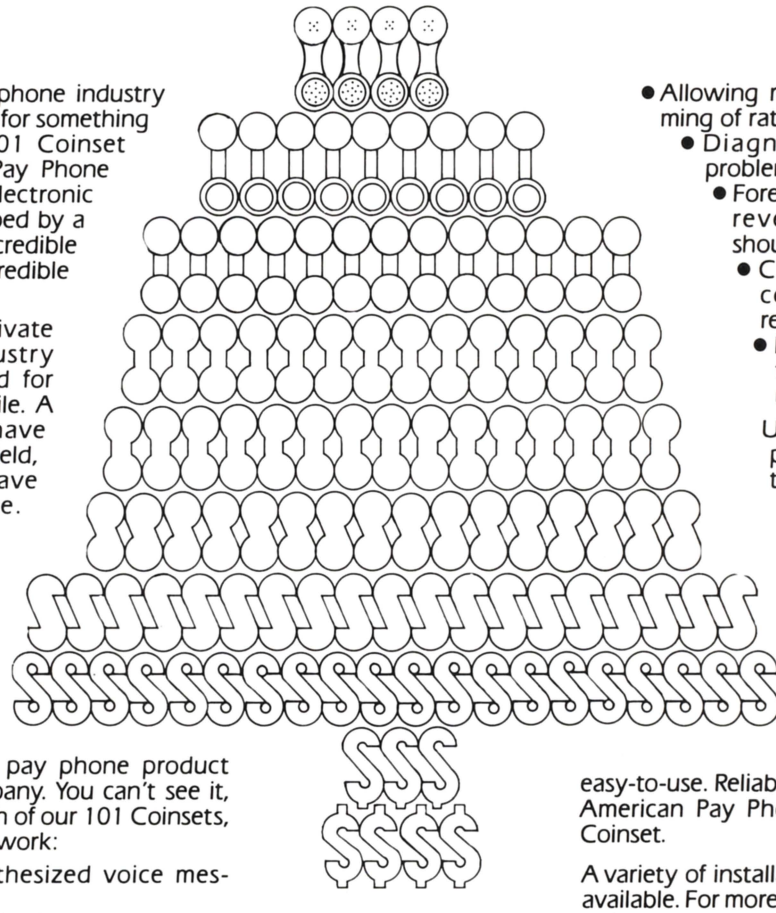
"[redacted]

Interactive games are going to be a tremendous help. Finally a way to charge more than 25 cents a play and get away with it! We have cut low volume accounts and concentrated on our good spots. Profits have increased more than we expected.

[redacted]"

PENNSYLVANIA

Profits with a Ring.



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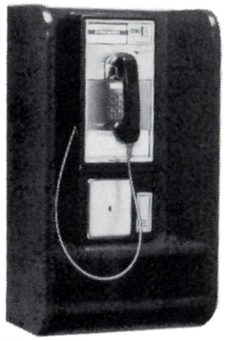

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SHARPE SHOOTING

MEDIA RUMBLINGS BENEFIT INDUSTRY

BY ROGER SHARPE

I've begun to notice some media rumblings lately, and they have been extremely favorable. There has been a definite resurgence in the awareness and popularity of coin-operated amusement games. More people are recognizing how coin-op games have evolved in the past few years.

Take, for example, the recent efforts of The Sharper Image mail-order catalog company. For The Sharper Image, pinball has a special allure and appeal that the company wanted to capitalize on for the Christmas season. At first the company wanted to include in its catalog a "classic" machine some standout piece that may have been released about 10 years ago recreated specially for it. The idea really didn't fly, but the company didn't lose hope or enthusiasm for the undertaking.

I talked to people at the company about other options, and we came up with a good way to get something pinball-related to their audience. The idea was to offer original backglass art.

Now, thanks to the efforts of Rob Berk, who put together the very successful Pinball Expo, The Sharper Image is announcing the availability of old *Spiderman* backglasses. That's just this year. If things go well, one can only imagine what might be offered next year.

The Sharper Image's interest in pinballs is all well and good, and it does help get the word out about coin-op machines, but it is only one example. Further legitimizing the claim that coin-op is back and healthy was a recent *New York Times* editorial package of three articles about leisure-time entertainment. The articles were in the financial section of the newspaper's Sunday, September 28, edition. The following excerpt from the lead story establishes the general tone of the articles, which were written by Sherry Sontag:

> But now, very slowly, the excitement is creeping into the electronic game world . . . even pinball is coming back, in new electronic versions that talk and play much faster than their predecessors.
>
> "There is no question about it, the industry is in a better position than it has been in years," said Harold Vogel, an entertainment industry analyst at Merrill Lynch Capital Markets. It's not super healthy yet, but it's coming back. This is a modest rebound.
>
> Unlike earlier video games like *Pac-Man*, which could be played by only one person at a time, the games and arcades that are gaining in popularity now are the ones that provide for social interaction. New video games produced by Atari, Bally, and Sega, among the largest manufacturers of electronic games, allow up to four people to play at a time without taking turns
>
> In fact, the fad for interactive electronic games has given rise to huge electronic playpens that look as though they were designed by science-fiction writers.

NEW APPRECIATION

This lead-off feature sets the stage for a new appreciation of what has developed in the industry since the "old boom times." And it's interesting that Sontag goes on to mention Planet Photons and Lazer Mazes as the new kind of locations. In fact, these "new breed" operations have made some remarkable inroads, as a companion piece in the *Times* stated:

> Eerie synthesizer music floated through the dim, foggy room as about 20 youths wearing bulky helmets with flashing lights and cumbersome battery-pack belts sneaked around corners, up ramps, and through narrow corridors shooting each other with phasers. They had each paid about $3 for a six-and-a-half-minute jaunt through Planet Photon, and they seemed to be getting their money's worth.
>
> "It's a haunted house jazzed up with lights, technology, and other things," said Ray B. Brown, chairman of the Department of Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University. "But ghosts are out of style. Star Wars is in."
>
> Planet Photon has, through franchises, jumped from one Dallas prototype in 1984 to 13 centers. By the end of the year there will be 30 in the United States,

Toronto, and Japan, said George A. Carter III, president of Dallas-based Photon Entertainment, Inc.

The centers are not cheap to set up. The company charges franchisees $75,000 for the use of the Photon name. Moreover, franchisees spend between $600,000 and $1.5 million to create the ambience of the planet.

"It's an alternate form of recreation," said John Macchiaverna, head of Mid-Atlantic, an amusement corporation that has a franchise in New Jersey and is going public to raise funds for four more locations. People who think of going to a movie or bowling will start thinking of Photon."

There is competition in the wings, though: Laser Maze. For about $1 a minute, players get to wander through a maze of rooms in which robots that have been doctored to look like space aliens pop up in random fashion. The player tries to shoot the robots between the eyes with an infrared gun. A hit sets off a series of lighting effects that makes the robots look as if they have blown up. You see something like an X-ray, the remains, then the lights go out," said ALvaro J. Villa, president of AVG, Inc., which designed the system.

Both Lazer Maze and Planet Photon hope to become household words. Each has licensed its name and characters for toys and other products. Planet Photon has gone even further: It has created a syndicated television series that will tell of a Photon player who is recruited by space aliens to become a warrior.

One might get the feeling that Yul Brynner's Westworld might be just around the corner: A fantasy environment amusement park set up with different robotic-based adventures. It's almost as if some have a vision that overshadows the limited sphere of self-contained video challenges. Why play with a joystick, facing a color monitor, when you can be part of the total experience, something like that portrayed in the Disney movie *Tron*? And, more importantly, the trend is capturing the attention of the media and, obviously, those in the business who see this as something that can be marketed and built up.

VIDEO DEVELOPMENTS

Fortunately, the *New York Times* also looked at the latest games and trends in design. The result was some very impressive observations and product positioning that can only benefit the industry. One dealt with developments in coin-operated video entertainment:

> A woman manipulating the character of Questor the elf was face to face with the shrouded figure of death. She, or, more accurately, Questor, was saved by Merlin the wizard, handled by the young man next to her.
>
> They were playing *Gauntlet II*, an Atari game that is one of the country's top-earning coin-operated games. *Gauntlet* and similar games, such as Bally's *Rampage* and Sega's *Quartet*, have musical scores, animated characters, and special effects. And each allows several people to play together.
>
> To Stewart Brand, an engineer who has written extensively on future technology, that realization (that the games had to offer players more involvement and greater challenges) is long overdue. "It's very odd it has taken them so long to get through the boring barrier," he said. "With the old games, once you figured out the tricks, it was over. It becomes much more interesting when you bring people back in."
>
> He envisions future games that would create virtual reality, where if your character goes in the water, the joystick will be harder to move. In fact, manufacturers already are going in that direction. Jerry S. Momoda, product manager for Sega, said his company will release a simulator' game [*Out Run*] this fall that will make people feel' the action on the screen.
>
> All the games are a hard sell these days, though. Arcade owners and people who lease equipment have storage rooms full of old games for which the resale market is virtually dead, and are loath to purchase many more.

And so the public is finally recognizing what the industry has been moving toward for the past few years. From simulators and more interactive storylines, to very precise simulations, the equipment has taken fantastic leaps ahead. But it's not just video that is recapturing the public's interest, as evidenced by the third of the *New York Times* features.

BEST COMES LAST

In fact, a pinball fan might think that the best was saved for last, as the wrap-up discussed the health and prosperity of the all-time coin-op favorite:

> "I don't like video," said Jon Martel, 15, as he leaned and jabbed at the flippers on a glossy pinball machine at the Broadway Arcade [Steve Epstein's famous New York City location]. "With pinball, you can work the machine, you have more control."
>
> Pinball machines, considered outdated a few years ago, are showing up again at arcades, bowling alleys, and convenience stores. Sales of equipment, particularly new, fast, microchip-run machines that come complete with voices, are up 50 percent this year.
>
> *High Speed*, by Williams Electronic Games, Inc., is the acknowledged best seller. It has sold 18,000 units, and is the second most successful pinball game in the company's 40-year history.
>
> Williams has replaced Bally's Midway division as industry leader in pinball. The reason, said Steven C. Blattspieler, Bally Midway's vice president of sales, is that the business is so competitive that only a handful of machines make much money. "On a one-to-10 scale, if

you don't have a 10, you don't sell anything in significant numbers," he said. And Bally, he conceded, "has not had a 10."

Premier Technology, another pinball manufacturer, has not had a 10 either. But it is doing quite well with a trio of 9s, said Gilbert G. Pollack, the company's president. The company has issued three pinball machines, each complete with the latest bells and whistles, since November ['85].

To Mr. Pollack, the good showing is vindication of his continued faith in pinball at a time when most everyone else seemed to think of the game as an unsalvageable has-been. Premier, in fact, has its genesis as the pinball division of Mylstar, a game manufacturer that the Coca-Cola Company, its parent, shut down two years ago.

Mr. Pollack, who had been working for Mylstar, and a partner took what he now calls a "several million dollar risk," and bought the assets of the defunct pinball division. "We thought video had run its course, and the industry would return to basics, and that included pinball," Mr. Pollack said. "Pinball has been around for 50 years, it's had its ups and downs, but it's always survived."

And so the articles ended, putting much into accurate perspective. They provided a sound overview of a variety of items that are not only newsworthy but also revealing of how the industry is perceived. No longer was the tone reflective of a dying industry, but rather an uplifting look at a business on the rise, slowly and methodically regaining its presence in the marketplace.

For a glossing over of the highlights, the articles were great for the coin-op industry, which can only be encouraged to keep up the research and implementation of state-of-the-art attractions. They also should encourage those who have never lost hope that the business would rebound someday. Well, that someday is fast approaching, and the industry must remain poised to take the initiative and hold on.

GAMEROOMS NEED EQUIPMENT INFUSION

I suppose the past couple of years have taken their toll on me. I've had to make an adjustment that hasn't come easy, considering how my life used to be. In 1976, when New York City opened up to pinball, life became like an endless arcade game probably to the degree that I was spoiled.

There were a good half dozen arcades in Manhattan to visit regularly, and if the latest equipment was somehow misdirected, I would drive 100 miles to the Jersey shore to search out a particular machine. And if all this weren't enough, the games that I had to choose from normally were in excellent shape.

Things fell apart dramatically for me, however, when I moved to Connecticut, first to Westport and then the little town of Cheshire. My options, as the saying goes, are slim to none. The much-heralded Arnie's Place in Westport proved a major disappointment the first time when I walked through the doors pinball machines in butcher's-block "shells" and not even new equipment. The golden oldies wouldn't have been so bad if they had played decently. And the videos were more old than new.

Milford Rec, as it's called, had potential with its large floor space, and the mix showed some promise. But I wanted more than just a half dozen pins.

Then it was up to Cheshire and work in Waterbury. These places are about 100 miles from New York and 130 from Boston. Not too bad considering, but the lack of gamerooms is depressing to say the least.

For the past year or so my only real choice has been a place in Waterbury called Crazy Eights, which is operated by a fellow named Leo Weiner.

You have to understand that Waterbury isn't a major cosmopolitan mecca. In fact, it's a mildly depressed area fighting the long road back to respectability. Still, it is one of the larger cities in Connecticut and has a melting pot of locals who would seem to be prospective customers for a top-notch gameroom. This is especially true since there isn't a competing place within a half-hour drive.

There you have the scenario: one arcade for the populace.

Crazy Eights remains an enigma to me. Sure, there's a wall of pinball machines inside, but the array features *Space Invaders*, *Sharpshooter* (the original), *Gorgar*, *Firepower* (the original), *Xenon*, *Big Game*, *Time Warp*, *Stellar Wars*. I think you get the drift.

TRAPPED IN 1979

It's as if I'm trapped in 1979 and '80 caught in a place that really hasn't recognized the recent past, let alone the present. I will give Weiner some credit, since he broke down and had a *Comet* in Crazy Eights for a few months. Shockingly, that was followed by a *High Speed*, although *Comet* departed soon after.

I'm a captive audience at Crazy Eights because there isn't another place to spend my money. This wouldn't be a total loss if the machines were in top-notch condition, but they show their age with worn playfields, weak flippers, and dead thumper bumpers. Almost every machine has scoring features that have somehow bitten the dust.

I'm not alone in this. The equipment is being played. As I said earlier, there is an audience, but it's one that isn't being cultivated or even given a chance to show what it might do given a broader selection of more

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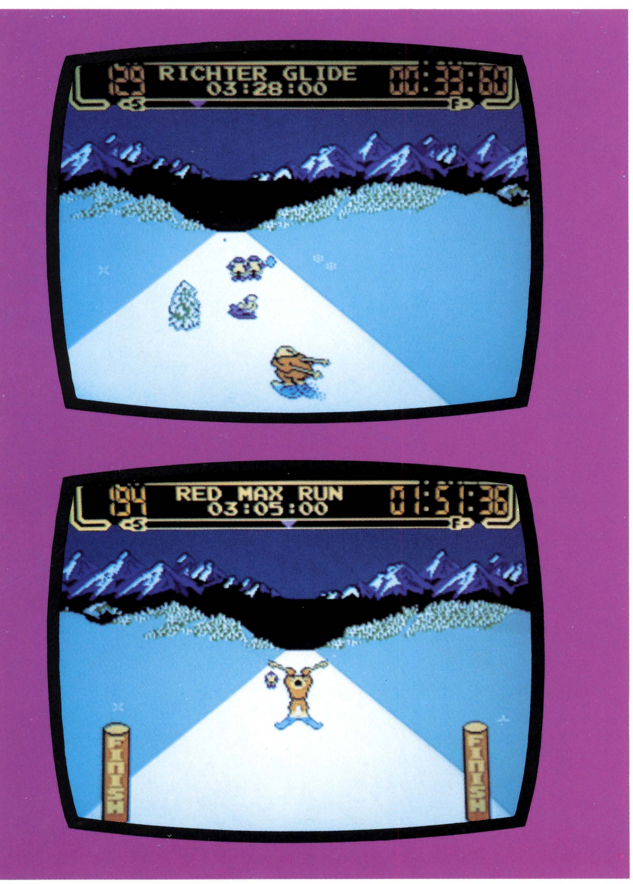

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current games.

I'm not suggesting that Weiner turn over his entire stock to newer pieces, but would it be such a risk to introduce some recent machines and see what the reaction would be? I've watched the players who come in every day, and I've made a few stops on weekend nights just to see what kind of traffic Crazy Eights gets. It has some dedicated customers as well as a good teen audience.

But the bottom line is that they're not getting enough for their money.

Weiner has done a bit better with videos than pins, in introducing contemporary attractions such as *Space Harrier*, *Sprint 3*, *Ikari Warriors*, *World Series*, *Gauntlet*, *Hang-On* (which came and went), *Mania Challenge*, and a couple of other fill-ins. Obviously he has a much higher regard for video and has managed to keep a pretty good balance between the old and the new.

But for all the space he has dedicated to pinball, the opposite holds true, and the players are being short-changed as a result. After all, when the equipment that has seen its better days (in this case years), even five balls for a token isn't enough.

INVESTMENT NEEDED

What would it take for Crazy Eights to slightly upgrade its pins? Possibly Weiner could fill in another new piece and maybe turn over a couple of the really "beaten" machines for some still-alive-and-kicking games that might be a couple of years old. With that, we're not close to mortgaging the farm, and the payoff should be apparent.

For an investment of about $3,000, Weiner easily could realize increased traffic to immediately lessen the effect of the cash outlay. But, more important, he should be able to discover whether he can increase the profitability of his business.

Of course, I'm suggesting that he put some more money into Crazy Eights (in whose success he already has a vested interest) as a way to keep his current customers and attract new ones.

How can anyone expect players to plunk down token after token in machines that are five or six years old and decrepit to boot? There's only so much one can hope to get from even the most undemanding players.

Beneath what might seem to be a personal sob story there is a fundamental issue here, which is that Crazy Eights is the rule and not an exception to what is really going on. With so many gamerooms closing in the past few years, those that have remained in business are, by and large, doing so with a minimum of effort. Undoubtedly, Leo Weiner, and others like him, have determined what is a comfortable level of return on their existing machines and have decided that if the "nut" is being met week to week, nothing more needs to be done.

In essence, such gameroom operators have established the lowest common denominator of effort needed to tease the willing players without ever really trying to completely capture them (and, in the process, attract new players, because the level of coin-op entertainment is such that people have to see for themselves what all the excitement is about).

Without the infusion of new, more advanced equipment, familiarity and sameness result in bored players and lost revenues.

CAN'T-WIN APPROACH

But this is a problem facing every operator knowing what and how much is enough to gain the greatest return for the longest time. It is unfortunate that the Leo Weiners of the world have chosen to take a can't-win approach to the business. Compare

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PLAY METER ASKS:

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY?

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NEW YORK

PLAY METER ASKS:

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY?

"

I think the amusement business will still come back up to a somewhat higher level and will be able to maintain this level. But the owner is going to have to be smart in both his buying, and in how he promotes his business. In smart buying of his equipment (kits or dedicated) he will be making the most for his money. The pieces will not need to be the latest, but rather targeted to his players.

"

MICHIGAN

Crazy Eights' situation with that of some aggressive arcade operators in the East who have a successful gameroom in the Whitestone section of Queens, N.Y.

Across the highway from the successful location, in a strip center, was another gameroom that just couldn't catch on. Let it suffice to say that the owners had not been able to hit on a way to cut into their competitor's trade. So what happened? The owners of the struggling arcade sold out to the owners of the successful arcade, and now the neighborhood has two gamerooms that are not only surviving, but thriving. It was just a matter of filling in some holes, making some moderate alterations to the interior of the weaker operation, and sitting back as the people and money came pouring in.

The secret isn't really a secret. No matter what the business, arcades included, in order to be successful, one has to work at it and refine it until everything falls into place. Often there has to be a real belief in the industry for this to happen, because if any operator doesn't believe in his product, he probably would be better off opening a show store or something.

Arcade operators need to entice customers to walk through the doors and part with their money. And, if the presentation has been done right, to ensure that the audience will keep coming back for more. That's the challenge of this industry.

But it's the Leo Weiners who are holding back the industry's potential for growth. They're the main reason that the industry's recovery has been slow and painful and that the industry can't shake many of the negative opinions about it.

For every success there are five eyesores that are contributing nothing to the continued development of the industry.

I suppose for most ignorance is bliss, and they can't see the need to take a stand that might change the status quo. Instead, they go back to their rose-colored glasses and delude themselves in believing that everything is only getting better. But the problem won't go away until there are corrective measures or a set of standards that become the foundation of an industry that wants to move ahead.

It's not an impossible task, but as I write this I know that tomorrow will be business as usual for all the Crazy Eights in the country. Given the industry's potential, it's all such a waste.

income averaging have been repealed. Non-itemized charitable deductions may be deducted 100 percent in 1986 only. The $100 dividend exclusion has been repealed as well.

ITEMIZED DEDUCTIONS

Deductions for state and local sales taxes (all kinds) have been repealed. Medical expenses are deductible above a base of 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income. Unless you have unusually high medical bills, this is out.

Mortgage interest on a primary residence and one other residence is fully deductible. All other interest deductibility will be phased out over five years, such that interest is reduced 35 percent in 1987, 60 percent in 1988, 80 percent in 1989, 90 percent in 1990, and 100 percent in 1991. Many lending institutions are now offering revolving credit based on the equity in your house. The idea is to consolidate your debts all into your house so that the interest remains fully deductible.

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

Miscellaneous expenses are deductible above a base of two percent of adjusted gross income. The moving expense has been reclassified as a miscellaneous expense, as have business expenses. Some other expenses (any work related expenses for the handicapped and gambling losses to the extent of winnings, for example) are deductible regardless of the floor.

RETIREMENT SAVINGS AND PENSION PLANS

The maximum annual employee contribution to cash or deferred savings arrangements under 401(K) plans has been reduced to $7,000 (indexed to inflation).

Defined-benefit and defined-contribution plans are essentially the same under the TRA'86 with minor variations.

Changes in individual retirement accounts were reviewed in last month's "Tax Tips" column.

ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX

The alternative minimum tax rate is 21 percent, and there have been additions to the preference-items list. Among the additions are installment sales, net loss from passive investments without regard to cash basis, and interest on private-purpose tax-exempt bonds (after 4/8/86). Net operating losses (NOLs) cannot offset more than 90 percent of minimum taxable income.

BUSINESS INCOME (ACTIVE)

The new rules dealing with the business use of a house, hobby income and losses, meals and entertainment, and the depreciation limitation for passenger autos will be hard felt by all businesses, especially small businesses.

As a direct result of a 1985 tax-court decision, the TRA'86 provides that no home-office deduction will be allowed for the business use of a portion of a taxpayer's home solely because the employee leases a part of his home to his employer.

Also, in response to a 1985 tax-court decision that stated it was possible for home operating expenses to create an operating loss that could be used to offset income from other sources, the act adopts the "services" definition of gross income. As a result, the business portion of home operating expenses (other than expenses that are deductible without regard for business use) are deductible only to the extent that they do not exceed the gross income of the business reduced by all other deductible expenses attributable to the activity. The act provides relief

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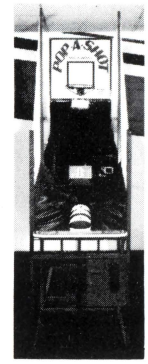

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"I feel the amusement games are making more money and they will continue to pick up over the next few years."

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in that home-office expenses that are disallowed due to the income limit may be carried forward and deducted in future years, subject to the same income-limit rules.

To help taxpayers avoid the facts-and-circumstances test to determine if a particular activity is being pursued for profit (a business) rather than recreation (a hobby), the act provides that if an activity is profitable in three out of five consecutive years, it is presumed to be a business rather than a hobby. The old law provided a two-of--five-years formula. The profitability test for breeding, training, showing, and racing horses remains two of seven consecutive years.

The new law reduces the amount of what would otherwise be an allowable deduction for business meals or entertainment by 20 percent. This percentage-reduction rule applies to all food, beverage, and entertainment costs, even though incurred in the course of travel away from home. The act provides for the following seven exceptions to the rule:

1. If the full value of the meal or entertainment is included in the recipient's taxable income or is excludable under the fringe-benefit rules.

2. Employee reimbursement for the cost of a meal or entertainment; the percentage-reduction rule applies only to the party making the reimbursement.

3. Traditional employer-paid employee recreation expenses (a company Christmas party, for example).

4. The cost of samples and other promotional activities that are made available to the general public.

5. Expenses for attending a sports event (if it qualifies as a charitable, fund-raising event). Deductions for skyboxes are all but eliminated.

6. The cost of providing meals or entertainment that the taxpayer sells for adequate and full consideration.

7. During calendar years 1987 and 1988, the cost of a meal that is provided as an integral part of a qualified banquet meal.

For the cost of a business meal to be deductible under TRA'86, the meal

must meet the "directly related" or "associated with" test, which under the old law only applied to entertainment expenses, and not the "conducive atmosphere" test. Additionally, the cost of a ticket to any entertainment activity is now limited (prior to the 20-percent-reduction rule) to the face value of the ticket. The "ice" paid to a scalper is not deductible.

With regard to meals, the requirement of business discussion is waived if an individual is traveling away from home on business and has a meal alone or with persons, such as family members, who are not business connected, and the deduction is claimed only for the meal of that individual. (The meal and the travel are considered "directly related" and are 100-percent deductible.)

In general, taxpayers are required to keep adequate records to substantiate meal and entertainment expenses. They are not, however, required to provide documentary evidence (such as receipts) for meals that cost less than $25. The use of a daily diary or log would generally be considered adequate records for purposes of the IRS rules regarding meals of such a nominal amount. The TRA'86 did not alter these rules.

ACTIVE, PASSIVE, AND PORTFOLIO INCOME & LOSSES

Deductions of passive tax-shelter losses may be taken only against similar passive income and not against salary income or "portfolio income" from such as certificates of deposit, bonds, or stock. Special exceptions apply for working interests in oil and gas ventures and up to $25,000 for active participants in non-partnership real-estate investments. The rental-income exception phases out for taxpayers with between $100,200 and $150,000 in adjusted gross income. For taxpayers with low income housing credits or rehabilitation credits, however, the phase-out is set at between $200,000 and $250,000 for property placed in service before 1992 with 10 percent or more of the project costs incurred before 1990.

For the first time, rehabilitation credits are available for buildings other than those certified as historic. The building must be older than 50 years.

DEPRECIATION

As a presidential candidate, Reagan suggested the old class system (also known as asset-depreciation range or ADR) of depreciation was too arbitrary and complex. He pushed hard for a "simpler" system in 1981. He encouraged the Congress to modify the depreciation rules and create an accelerated-cost-recovery system (ACRS). Well, here we go again. I guess we had it too simple. Each year Congress has modified the ACRS. I would be happy to see the old ADR methods again.

The TRA'86 retained the accelerated cost-recovery system (now called the MACRS), but the number of recovery classes has been increased from five to eight.

The newly modified depreciation classes are determined by the ADR midpoints for the property. Light trucks, computer-based switching equipment, and research and experimentation property as well as automobiles have been added to the five-year class.

Property contained in the three-, five-, seven-, and 10-year classes is to be depreciated using the 200-percent declining-balance method (also called the double-declining balance). Property in the 15- and 20-year classes is depreciated using a 150-percent declining-balance method. Residential rental real estate contained in the 27.5-year class (currently 19 years) and non-residential rental real estate in the 31.5-year class is depreciated using the straight-line method.

Expensing is allowed under Section 172 of up to $10,000 of investments annually for taxpayers whose total investment in personal property does not exceed $200,000.

Effective for years beginning January 1, 1987, the depreciation deduction for passenger cars used in a business activity will be limited as follows: $2,560 for the first year placed in service; $4,100 for the second year; $2,450 for the third year; and $1,475 for each year thereafter.

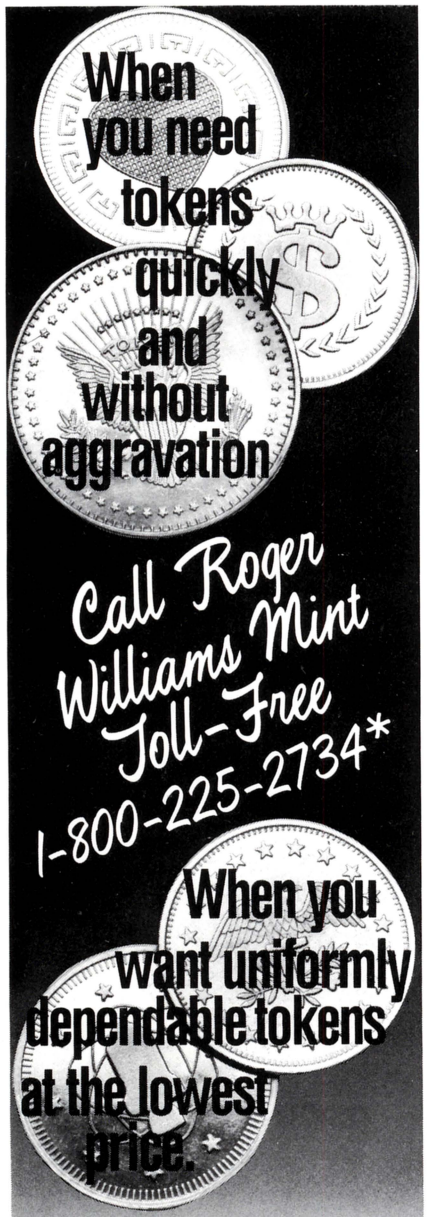
IRS regulations and a recent tax-court decision also bar any depreciation deduction for computer equipment if it's used less than 50 percent and is not a requirement of the job.

USING MAGNETIC MEDIA

IRS Form 1099 general filing requirements as well as defenses against IRS fines and penalties have been discussed in previous "Tax Tips" columns. Only briefly discussed have been the requirements and conditions for the filing of information returns such as 1099s on magnetic media such as tape, diskettes, cassettes, or mini-disks.

The IRS has issued Revenue Procedures 86-32 and 86-37, which have been made available to the public in Publications 1253, 1220, and 1311. The publications are available from the Magnetic Media Coordinator, IRS National Computer Center, P.O. Box 1359, Martinsburg, WV 25401-1359; (304) 263-8700. The regulations are updated and published each year.

If you are required to file 50 or more information returns, you must do so using magnetic media. Persons required to file may be subject to penalties for failure to follow the instructions in this revenue procedure. Penalties include $50 for each document (1) required but not submitted, (2) required to be submitted electronically, but actually submitted manually, (3) submitted without a taxpayer identification number (TIN) or with an incorrect TIN, or (4) filed late. The maximum penalty is $50,000, but there is no maximum penalty if the failure to meet the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requirements is due to intentional disregard. The IRS strongly encourages filers to review their data for accuracy before submission to prevent erroneous notices to persons for whom reports are filed.

Effective January 1, 1986, magnetic media processing for all service centers was centralized at the previously mentioned IRS National Computer Center. All requests for information publications, undue hardship waivers, extensions, or forms should be directed to the center.

To meet the complicated series of requirements you can use an outside service bureau, file directly yourself, or request a waiver from filing. IRS Form 4419 is the Application for Magnetic Media Reporting of Information Returns, and IRS Form 8508 is the Request for Waiver from Filing Information Returns on Magnetic Media. With Form 4419 you must submit "test" files between August 15 and December 15 each year.

After you have received approval to file on magnetic media, you do not need to re-apply each year. Nevertheless, notify the IRS if (1) there are hardware or software changes that would affect the characteristics of your magnetic-media submissions or (2) you discontinue filing on magnetic media for a year.

The IRS has pledged to help new filers meet the rules and to review test files. You *must* submit a test file in order to participate. You may be relieved to know that 27 states are participating in the program. You submit information to the IRS, which shares it with the participating states. The 27 participating states are:

Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Wisconsin.

Anyone required to file original or corrected returns on magnetic media may request a waiver from the filing requirements by submitting Form 8508. The waiver, if approved, will only provide exemptions from magnetic media filing for one tax year. Filers may not apply for a waiver for more than one tax year at a time; you must re-apply each tax year that a waiver is necessary. (Similar rules apply for other IRS forms, such as W-2s. Rules vary, however, so professional assistance is strongly urged.)

Requests for waivers must be made to the National Computer Center if filing on magnetic media would be an "undue hardship." Such requests must be filed at least 90 days before the returns are due. For Form 1099, the due date is March 2.

Jeffrey Rosenthal, E.A., is an operator and a tax accountant. He can be reached by writing M&J Tax Service, Ltd., 1967 Bath Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11214, or calling (718) 232-0342.

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the human side

A Dale Carnegie® Feature

Five Steps to Better Hiring

by Arthur R. Pell, Ph.D.
Consultant, Dale Carnegie & Associates, Inc.

Charlie Campbell shook his head in frustration. He had spent three months seeking to fill the position of Marketing Analyst, and now, after only six weeks on the job, it was obvious that the person selected was not going to succeed. Where had he gone wrong? She appeared to have the necessary credentials and experience. She interviewed well. What could he do to assure that, when he had to fill this job again, he would make a better choice?

Develop Meaningful Job Specs

When the vacancy for a marketing analyst occurred, Charlie pulled the old job specifications from the files and reviewed them. The specs called for a college degree. Charlie felt that a Masters degree in business would be better, so he upgraded the educational requirement. He also changed some of the experience needed to fit what he thought would be useful at this time. Unfortunately, these decisions were based on his unsubstantiated concept of the job.

When he began the job search, he quickly learned his "dream candidates" were not interested in the job and salary offered. Until he accepted this and readjusted the job requirements to a meaningful level, he had wasted several weeks of valuable time.

Analyze Resumé and Application

Charlie received over thirty resumés in response to his new ad. They all looked good. Which ones should he see for the interview? When screening resumés, look for the following:

1. *Does applicant meet the basic specifications?*

Don't waste time calling candidates who fail to meet the key requirements for the job.

2. *Look for omissions*

Many resumés omit dates of employment. This may be done to hide periods of unemployment or to leave an impression of having more or better experience than really achieved. One way to overcome this is to have all applicants complete an application form. This can be mailed to them and returned before you determine who is to be interviewed. If there is a rush to fill the job, telephone the applicants in whom you are interested to obtain missing information.

3. *Look for inconsistancies*

An applicant may claim heavy background in one area, yet the companies for whom he or she worked are not involved in that area. Jack K.'s resumé played up his background in marketing consumer packaged goods, but, of his ten year's experience, only two were with consumer oriented companies.

4. *Look for progress*

For the amount of years in the work force, has the candidate made appropriate progress in terms of advancement and earnings?

Compare the backgrounds of your candidates as they relate to the job specs and then as they relate to each other and select the best for the next stop — the job interview.

Ask Questions to Uncover True Qualifications

Once you have made the applicant feel at ease by a friendly greeting and a few comments on noncontroversial aspects of the applicant's background, *ask "open-end questions":*

"Tell me about your experience with the XYZ Company."

"What background do you have in sales analysis?"

"Describe your most recent project."

On the basis of the responses received, focus on key aspects of the candidate's background in that area and *ask specific questions* on details of what was done and accomplished. Mae L. commented in response to an open-end question on her most recent project that she had made a market study of the potential of a new product. Specific questions to elaborate and verify what she really did might include: "How did you obtain the needed data?" "What problems did you face in getting cooperation from the people involved?" "How did you solve them?" "What was the result?" "Describe the steps you took in your analysis." "What was the most difficult aspect of the project?" By asking about specific facets of the project rather than just accepting her statement, the interviewer will obtain a clear view of actual experience rather than the usual generalizations that are so often elicited in a job interview and it will help identify the real accomplishments of the candidate.

Evaluate Personal Characteristics

We hire not only a person's job skills, but also the personal characteristics the individual brings to the job. A person with good looks, charm, a gift of gab and a pleasant way makes such a good impression on us that we may be overly influenced by this veneer. To determine the true personality of the applicant, we must look beneath the surface.

By using "situational questions," true personality traits can often be uncovered. A situational question is one in which the candidate is asked to respond on how he/she handled delicate problems in the past or how hypothetical situations might be handled. For example, "A customer calls and is irate. The delivery promised has not arrived and the entire production schedule for this customer is in jeopardy. How did (or would) you handle this?" From the response, we can determine the candidate's integrity (would he/she lie about the delivery?), tact (was the candidate diplomatic?) attitude (was he/she loyal to the company?).

Verify

Wherever possible, contact the former employers of applicants in whom you have interest to verify that what they have told you is correct. More and more companies are reluctant to give information about former employees to others, but it is worth the effort to try.

One way to overcome resistance to giving information is to emphasize that you would like to *verify* information rather than ask for information. Before making a call, prepare a series of questions drawn from the applicant's application, resumé and your notes from the interview. Be sure to choose significant aspects of the background to use so you can obtain maximum information in a limited amount of time.

By following these five steps, a systematic approach to hiring will develop that will save time by eliminating applicants who are marginally qualified and increase the odds of selecting a candidate who will be productive and successful.

Pocket/purse size reprints may be purchased (10 for $10.00) or (25 for $20.00) from Dale Carnegie & Associates, Inc. 1475 Franklin Avenue, Garden City, NY 11530

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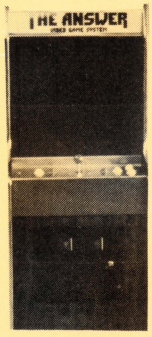

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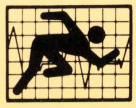

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Saturday, March 21
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Sunday, March 22
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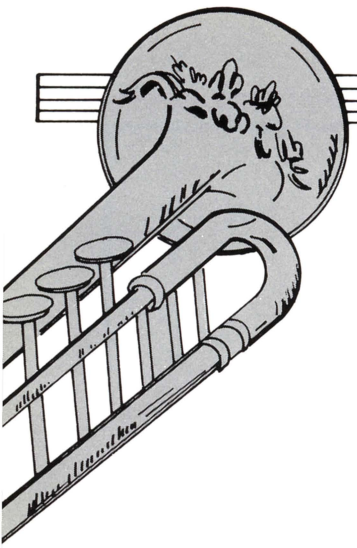

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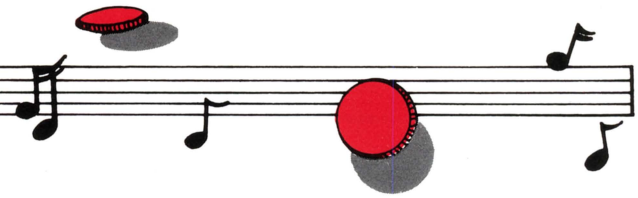

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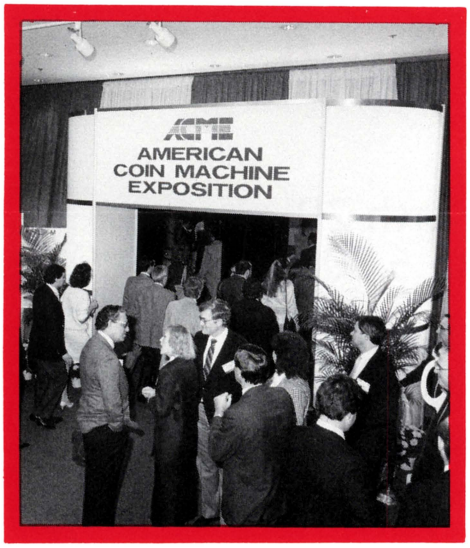

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12:00 NOON–5:00 PM . . . . . General Trade

Saturday, March 21

10:00 AM–12:00 NOON . . . Distributors Only
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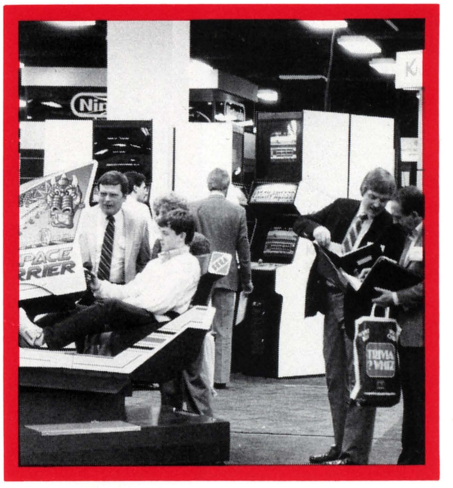
ACME '87 IS A CELEBRATION!

No visit to New Orleans would be complete without a celebration, and what a celebration we have for you! The American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation's Annual Appreciation Dinner promises to be a very special celebration in honor of Mr. Bill O'Donnell, first president and chairman of Bally Manufacturing Corporation, for his outstanding contributions to the industry. Capture the coin-op spirit and join us in a spectacular evening on Friday, March 20 at the Sheraton New Orleans. A lavish cocktail reception beginning at 7:00 pm kicks off an evening filled with fun and excitement. The roar of laughter will be heard from Bourbon Street to Baton Rouge when Red Buttons entertains the coin-operated industry during dinner with a very special show. Following the entertainment is the salute to Bill O'Donnell, a man whose strength and leadership brought the coin-operated industry into the mainstream of American lifestyles and business. And following dinner, the sounds of dixieland will keep you dancing 'til dawn! Celebrate good times with your coin-op friends and business associates, and join us in this special tribute to Bill O'Donnell. The AAMCF Appreciation Dinner will be a gala first evening of ACME '87!

Tickets can be purchased for $100 per person, or $1,000 per table (seating for 10). It's a great way to show your appreciation to your customers, your staff and your industry. To reserve your seats, complete the coupon contained in this brochure and return it with your check payable to the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation.



ACME '87 IS FUN FOR EVERYONE!

When friends, family and spouses of ACME '87 attendees work their way "down yonder", they can do so "New Orleans" style by attending any or all of the fascinating programs designed to captivate their interests! They can enhance their own personal style by attending our special make-up and color clinic, or sharpen their culinary skills and "cook it up" creole style with native New Orleans chefs. Experience the cultural richness of days gone by while touring historic plantation homes. Whatever your age or whatever your interest, ACME '87 has something for you!

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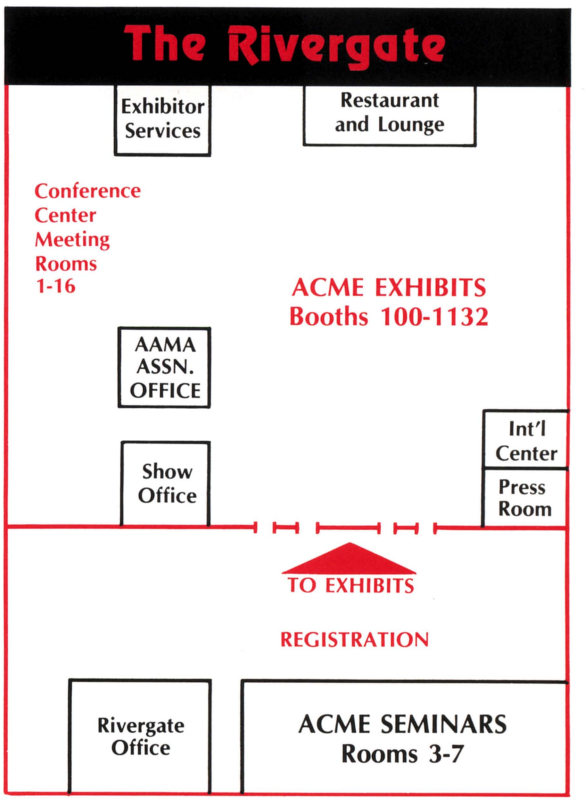
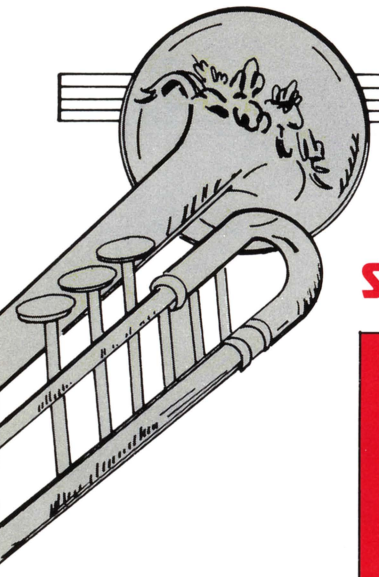




ACME 87
AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

FRIDAY MARCH 20

8:00 Registration Open

9:00 Comprehensive Troubleshooting — Part I

9:30 Private Pay Phones: Where is This Industry Now?
Insurance Needs: What You Must Know
Basic Technical for the Non-Technical Owner or Manager

10:00 Exhibits Open — Distributors Only

10:30

11:30

12:00 Exhibits Open — General Trade Admission

1:00 Spouse Event — The Right Face

2:00 Taxes and Accounting for the Operator
Vending: Is It For You?

3:00 Cutting Expenses and Increasing Profits

4:00 Free Session: Firing Line/Pinball

5:00

6:00

7:00 American Amusement Machine Association Annual Appreciation Dinner Honoring Mr. Bill O'Donnell, Grand Ballroom, Sheraton New Orleans

SATURDAY MARCH 21

Registration Open

Comprehensive Troubleshooting — Part II

Spouse Event: Plantation Tour/ Luncheon

How to Evaluate Your Business and Plan for Future Growth
Increasing Profits Through Leagues: Make Them Work for You
Legislative Update

Exhibits Open — Distributors Only

Exhibits Open — General Trade Admission

Protecting Locations Through Agreements/Using Contracts as Sales Tools
Maximizing Profits From Pinballs
Conversions
Computerizing Your Business

Free Session: Firing Line/Video

SUNDAY MARCH 22

Registration Open

Free Session: Standardization

Exhibits Open — General Trade Admission

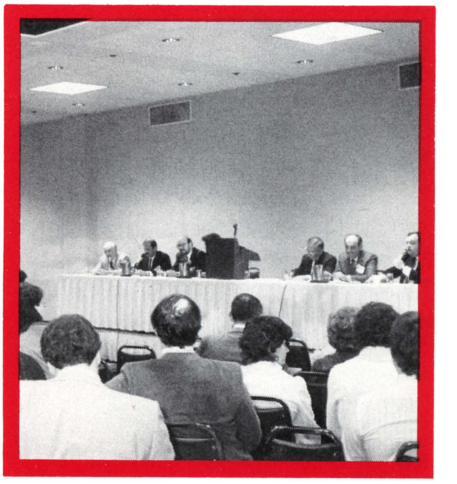
Free Session: How Promotional Activities Can Boost Your Bottom Line

Spouse Event: Creole Cookery/Lunch

Seminars
Advanced Technical Training
Exhibits Open Distributors Only
Open Forums
Spouse Events
Exhibits Open General Trade Admission

ACME '87 OPEN FORUMS

ATTEND ANY OR ALL OF THE FOUR "FREE" ACME '87 OPEN FORUMS. All ACME '87 registered attendees are invited to attend. Registration is not required for attendance at the Open Forums.



Firing Lines: Manufacturers, Operators, Distributors Speak Out

The Firing Line has been heralded as one of the most popular sessions since the first manufacturers' panel in 1980. Last year, operators and distributors were added to the panel of manufacturers for the first time, and it made for a better than ever group. This year, we're presenting TWO firing lines — one focusing on pinball, the other on video. ACME '87 attendees owe it to themselves to participate in these stimulating discussions, and hear the issues and answers to today's coin-op concerns.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20 **4:00 pm to 6:00 pm**
Firing Line: Pinball

Pinball has become a major force in the industry once again. This session consisting of manufacturers, distributors and operators will highlight the latest in pinball wizardry from a developmental and technical standpoint.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21 **5:00 pm to 7:00 pm**
Firing Line: Video

Video continues to be a vital element in the coin-op industry. Experts will lead discussions and answer questions about what's happening in the world of video games.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22 **9:00 am to 10:00 am**
Standardization

Standardizing various components is an issue of major concern to many operators. **Todd Erickson,** Summit Amusements, will moderate a panel featuring **Joe Dillon,** Williams Electronics; **Craig Johnson,** TATAKA; and **Steve Blattspieler,** Bally-Midway, who will discuss the movement towards standardization and its significance for today's operator.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22 **10:30 am to 12:30 pm**
How Promotional Activities Can Boost Your Bottom Line

This timely session on an extremely important subject should be a must for everyone dedicated to the coin-op industry. "Promotional activities and marketing are where it's at today," says seminar speaker **Mark Whittaker** of Bally's Aladdin's Castles. The industry needs all the promotion it can get to improve the image, and Mark will outline some ideas for all . . . not just arcade operators, but street operators as well. This is a free session, so put it on your schedule as one not to miss!

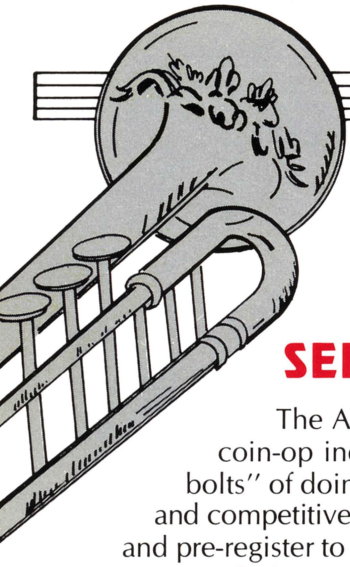
ADVANCED TECHNICAL TRAINING

Never before in the history of coin-operated trade events has a technical session been offered that is so complete and comprehensive in nature. The cost to attend this special 2-day, 6-hour session is $100, or $50 per session. Don't miss this "must-go" session for the coin-op technician "in-the-know."

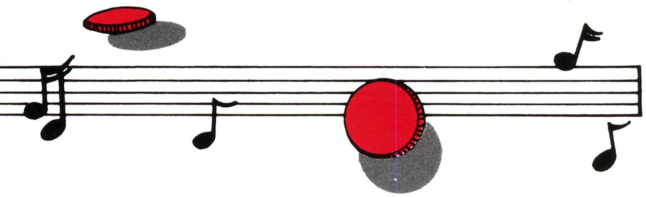
FRIDAY, MARCH 20 **9:00 am to 12:00 noon**
#104 Comprehensive Troubleshooting — Part I

SATURDAY, MARCH 21 **9:00 am to 12:00 noon**
#304 Comprehensive Troubleshooting — Part II

The most comprehensive technical seminar ever planned will cover logic board troubleshooting; repairs a field or shop technician would make with a logic probe and an O-scope; digital multimeters, other test equipment and actual board repairs; repairing power supplies and monitors and semiconductors. The sessions will include hands-on instruction, and allow ample time for questions and answers to details on each subject covered (time will be allotted for overrun).



ACME 87
AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION



ACME '87 SEMINAR SCHEDULE

The ACME '87 Seminar Program is the coin-op industry's answer to the "nuts and bolts" of doing business in today's challenging and competitive marketplace. **$AVE, $AVE, $AVE** and pre-register to attend the ACME '87 Educational Sessions at **$20 per session** or **three sessions for $50!** (On-Site Registration is a flat fee of $25 per session, per person).

FRIDAY, MARCH 20 — 9:30 am to 11:30 am

#101 Private Pay Phones: Where Is This Industry Now?

For several years now, operators have been trying to get a grasp on whether private pay phones are really worth the effort. Will operating private pay phones make money or is it less than operators have been led to believe? **John Huddleson,** Williams Electronics, is just one of the experts who will update new developments within the private pay phone industry to help operators avoid costly mistakes.

#102 Insurance Needs: What You Must Know

Everyone needs it but there are so many plans and options from which to choose that you should know what you are looking for. Do you know precisely what your coverage is? Do you think you are paying a fair price? Have you heard other operators say they got a better deal? Maybe they know something you don't about insurance needs. This session will help you decide what insurance best suits your situation and how to find it.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20 — 9:30 am to 11:30 am

#103 Basic Technical for the Non-Technical Owner or Manager

This session is for those who are not technically inclined but should or need to know the basics. Included will be instruction (in layman's terms) on coin mechanisms, dip switch settings, game adjustments, how to read bookkeeping information and simple troubleshooting.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20 — 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

#201 Taxes and Accounting for the Operator

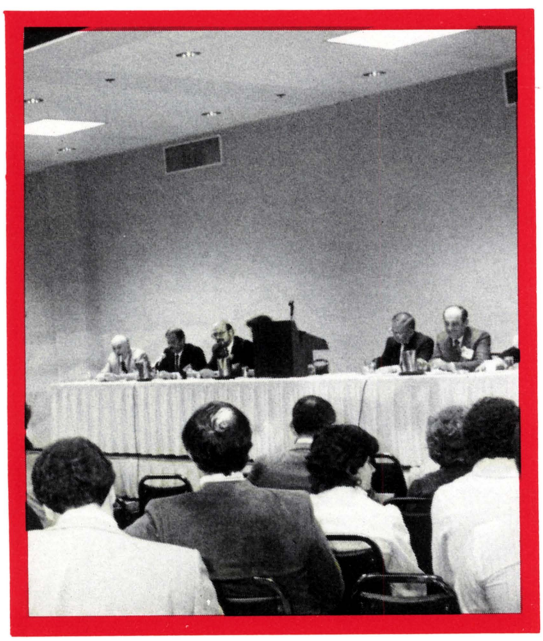
The new tax laws are on everyone's list of topics. This session will help you to understand how the new laws affect operators' particular situation and how to prepare for tax time. **Howard Levine** has a unique understanding of these laws and you will too after attending this seminar.

#202 Vending: Is It For You?

As operators look for new sources of income, a natural consideration is vending — bulk, cigarette, and food. It may not be as easy as it seems if you don't know what is involved, but it may be just what you are looking for if you have the guidance of experts. A panel of the experts you need to hear will share their special knowledge and help operators answer the question about whether vending is for them.

#203 Cutting Expenses and Increasing Profits

Isn't this just what everyone would hope to do in their business, cut overhead and at the same time increase profits? **Frank Seninsky, "Frank the Crank"** has some wonderful ideas for accomplishing this goal. He will go into detail about some programs that have helped his company cut expenses and increase profits.



ACME '87 SEMINAR REGISTRATION

CASH IN ON BIG $AVINGS AND PRE-REGISTER FOR ACME '87 EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS! (Restrictions Apply*).

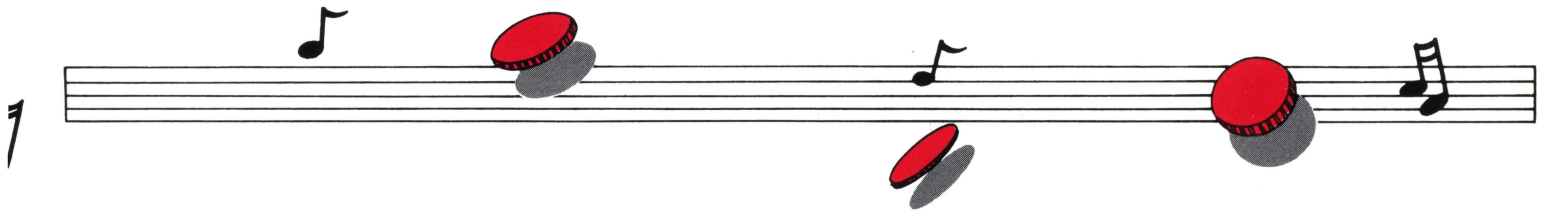
ATTEND ONE	Session for $20	
ATTEND THREE	Sessions for $50	— **$AVE $10!**
ATTEND SIX	Sessions for $100	— **$AVE $20!**
ATTEND NINE	Sessions for $150	— **$AVE $30!**

*RESTRICTIONS: DOES NOT APPLY TO ADVANCED TECHNICAL SESSIONS #104 and #304. APPLIES ONLY TO THOSE FORMS RECEIVED BY **FEBRUARY 20, 1987.** Seminar registration forms received after FEBRUARY 20, 1987, and all on-site seminar registration will be charged at the full rate of $25 per person, per session.

ADVANCED TECHNICAL SESSIONS*

The advance registration fee for (#104) "Comprehensive Troubleshooting — Part I" and (#304) "Comprehensive Troubleshooting — Part II" is **$50 per session or $100 for both sessions.** THIS APPLIES TO THOSE REGISTRATION FORMS RECEIVED BY **FEBRUARY 20, 1987.**

Registration for the Advanced Technical Sessions received after FEBRUARY 20, 1987, and on-site registration for these sessions will be charged at $60 per session or $120 for both sessions.



SATURDAY, MARCH 21 — 9:30 am to 11:30 am

#301 How to Evaluate Your Business and Plan for Future Growth

In the face of tough competition and an unpredictable economy, proper planning can be your strongest business ally. In this session, **Rich Babich** of Babich and Associates and president of Colorado Game Exchange will analyze buying decisions, financing choices, and growth projections. You will learn how to project where your business is now and where it's heading.

#302 Increasing Profits Through Leagues: Make Them Work For You

Bill Nemgar, Salmon River Amusements, is an operator that was instrumental in starting the Valley National Pool League and is a strong advocate of leagues. He has been one of the best received speakers we have had and is extremely knowledgeable in the industry. He is an operator, so he knows what operators want and need to know. This will be more than just a session on leagues and will include tips on making your business more successful.

#303 Legislative Update

This session will be informative and helpful in understanding legislative matters and what you, as an operator, can do to prevent detrimental laws. **Sharon Harris,** Stan Harris & Co. and, Pennsylvania Legislator, **John Purcell** will answer questions and give some useful guidelines to your benefit in dealing with the government.

ALL ACME '87 EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE RIVERGATE IN MEETING ROOMS 3 THROUGH 7.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21 — 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

#401 Protecting Locations Through Agreements/ Using Contracts as Sales Tools

Contracts can be a lifesaver when working with locations. They let both you and your locations know where you stand without questions. An expert in the field of contracts will explain what should and should not be included in a good contract. And, **Bill Cravens** of Capcom, one of the undisputed top salesmen in the industry, will explain how to sell the idea to locations.

#402 Maximizing Profits From Pinballs

Today's operator is paying more attention to pinballs and, in keeping with this current pinball revival, **Todd Erickson,** Summit Amusements, will present a "hands-on" orientation covering the basics of pinballs. Placement, adjustments, game settings, re-rubbering and maintaining the playfield are just a few of the subjects to be discussed in this informative session on pinball operation and maintenance.

#403 Conversions

Conversions, no doubt, account for the majority of game sales. Some operators do their own conversions, some have others do them. Either way, this session will help you know what makes a good conversion and whether it would be worthwhile to do it yourself.

#404 Computerizing Your Business

Computers are becoming a vital force in the world. It's a rarity to find a company not using a computer. **Ted Furkin,** All Star Amusements, will offer suggestions to those thinking of computerizing their business and talk about various software for those who may be disappointed in what they are currently using.

ACME 87
AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION

REGISTER TODAY FOR SPECIAL $AVINGS!

SEMINAR REGISTRATION FORM

Photocopy this form to register additional personnel

Complete and return the coupon below with your check (U.S. FUNDS) made payable to:
AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION, 16066 South Park Avenue, South Holland, IL 60473 USA.

MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 20, 1987

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country _____ Telephone _____ Telex _____

I would like to register _____ (no. of people) to attend _____ (no. of sessions).

Enclosed is my check in the amount of $ _____ .

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

FOR COMPLETE SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS, PLEASE REFER TO SEMINAR SCHEDULE CONTAINED WITHIN THIS BROCHURE. CHECK BOX CORRESPONDING TO THE SESSIONS YOU PLAN TO ATTEND.

$20 PER SESSION OR 3 FOR $50

Friday, March 20

9:30 am to 11:30 am
- ☐ #101
- ☐ #102
- ☐ #103

2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- ☐ #201
- ☐ #202
- ☐ #203

Saturday, March 21

9:30 am to 11:30 am
- ☐ #301
- ☐ #302
- ☐ #303

3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
- ☐ #401
- ☐ #402
- ☐ #403
- ☐ #404

ADVANCED TECHNICAL SESSIONS
$50 PER SESSION OR 2 FOR $100

9:00 am to 12:00 noon
- ☐ #104

9:00 am to 12:00 noon
- ☐ #304

ACME '86
LIST OF EXHIBITORS

A-1 Products
Ace Novelty Co., Inc.
Acme Premium Supply Corp.
Advanced Video Technology
Air-Vend
Alter Enterprises, Inc.
American Pay Phone System
American Productivity
Amusement Business
Amusement Technology
Arachnid, Inc.
Astropick
Atari Games Corporation
Bally Coin-Op Division
Baton Hardware Co.
R.H. Belam
Betson Enterprises
Bhuzac International Inc.
Dan Brechner & Co., Inc.
Canadian Coin Box Magazine
Capcom U.S.A. Inc.
Capitol Lighting Products Corp.
Carousel International Corp.
Century Vending & Distributing Inc.
Cinematronics, Inc.
Coin Acceptors, Inc.
Coin Communicators
Coin Controls, Inc.
Coin-It
Coin Machine Corp. of America
Coin Mechanisms, Inc.
The Colorado Game Exchange, Inc.
Communico, Inc.
Computer Amusement Systems, Inc.
Compuvend Enterprises
Crown Scale Ltd.
D & R Industries, Inc.
Dart World, Inc.
Data East USA, Inc.
Deltronic Labs, Inc.
Digital Controls, Inc.
Dynamo Corp.
Effective Management Systems
Elcotel, Inc.
Excalibur Vending Inc.
Exidy
The Game Exchange
Game Plan, Inc.
Grand Products, Inc.
Grayhound Electronics Inc.
Hoffman & Hoffman
Hoffman International
IDEA Industrial Design
Innovative Industries, Inc.
Intellicall
Intermark Amusements Inc.
International Communications, Inc.
International Prefer Assets
Intoxigraph Inc.
Johnston Products Company
Kel-Chad Inc.
Kerr & Associates
Kiddie Rides, USA
Konami, Inc.
M. Kramer Manufacturing Co. Inc.
Loewen-America Inc.
Memetron, Inc.
Merit Industries, Inc.
Mini Speedways U.S.A. Inc.
Miniature Electronics Inc.
Mobile Record Service Company
Monroe Distributing, Inc.
Nadel & Sons Toy Corp.
Network Paystations
Nichibutsu USA Corp.
Nintendo of America, Inc.
Nomac Ltd.
Original Air Tire
PGD
Patt Supply Corporation
Play Meter Magazine
Pop-A-Shot
Premier Technology
Profitable Games Inc. (PGI)
RePlay Magazine
Rock-Ola Mfg. Corp.
Roger Williams Mint
Romstar
Roth Novelty Company
Rowe International, Inc.
Royal Corona Inc.
SG Industries
SMS Manufacturing Corporation
Sega Enterprises, Inc. U.S.A.
The Silent Partner
Skee-Ball, Inc.
Smart Industries
Bob Snyder Associates
Standard Reis USA
Status Game Corporation
Steiner Manufacturing Co., Inc.
Taito America Corporation
Teck-Tron
Tehkan Inc.
Tele-Dynamics Inc.
Tornado Table Soccer, Inc.
Tourist Attractions & Parks Magazine
Triple "A"
UAI New Jersey, Inc.
United Artist Theatre Amusements
United Billiards
United Telephone, Inc.
V.O.C.A.L.
The Valley Company
Vending Times, Inc.
Video Express International Corp.
Videobox Networks Inc.
Wico Corp.
Williams Electronics Games, Inc.

The
American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation
Cordially Invites You To Attend
The Annual
Appreciation Dinner
Honoring
Mr. Bill O' Donnell
On
Friday, March 20, 1987
At The
Sheraton New Orleans

You're Invited

Dixieland jazz sets the tone for a very special evening beginning with a cocktail reception at 7:00 pm. A banquet feast befitting creole kings and queens follows at 8:00 pm. A top entertainer whose name has graced the neon lights of Las Vegas will delight you during dinner. The celebration continues as the entire coin-operated industry salutes its very own "Man of the Year," Mr. Bill O'Donnell, for his outstanding service and dedication to the industry. And the party goes on...with dancing and merriment to match the likes of Mardi Gras itself.

AMERICAN AMUSEMENT MACHINE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION APPRECIATION DINNER

TICKETS: $100.00 per person $1,000.00 per table (tables of 10)

I would like to reserve ____ tickets for the AAMCF Appreciation Dinner honoring Bill O'Donnell. Enclosed is my check made payable to the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation in the amount of $_____.

NAME _____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER (_____) _____
Area Code

Return order form with check to:
American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation
205 The Strand
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 548-0766

**Dinner proceeds are donated to a designated AAMCF charity. Your contribution is tax deductible.*

BADGE REGISTRATION

$AVE, $AVE, $AVE AND REGISTER TODAY FOR YOUR ACME '87 BADGE OF ADMISSION! Your personalized badge of admission will be mailed to you in advance of the Show — plus you will save $5! The fee for pre-registration is **$10 per person.** On-site registration is $15 per person. NOTE: There is a $5 replacement fee for lost badges — no exceptions. In order to take advantage of this special savings, your completed registration form accompanied by a check or money order (U.S. Funds) must be received by **February 20, 1987.** Forms received after February 20, 1987 will be returned as we cannot guarantee the mailing of your badges prior to the Show. Late applications and On-site registrations will be charged at the full rate of $15 per person.

Minors under the age of 19 will be admitted provided they have paid their registration fee and are accompanied by a badge-bearing adult. If you wish to register more than one person, either photocopy the enclosed coupon or attach a list of your company personnel, to include their badge classification.

SPOUSE PROGRAM REGISTRATION

If you are bringing a friend or spouse to ACME '87, they can register to attend one of our special programs to highlight their visit to New Orleans!

Tickets to the events with complete details will be mailed to all spouse program registrants whose forms are received before FEBRUARY 20, 1987. Anyone registering after FEBRUARY 20, 1987 can pick up their tickets at the ACME SPOUSE EVENTS DESK at The Rivergate between 9:30 am and 11:30 am on Friday, March 20. Additional tickets to the events, if available, will be sold on site. There will be no refunds within 24 hours of the start of the event.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20 — 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

THE RIGHT FACE — THE RIGHT YOU!

Discover the right look and the right color that sets your style apart from all the rest. Make-up experts will share tips on that special touch and effect that will set the tone for any occasion, while color consultants reveal the best color choices for you. This winning combination of make-up and color consulting is guaranteed to help you develop that winning style you call your own. **COST: $30**

SATURDAY, MARCH 21 — 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

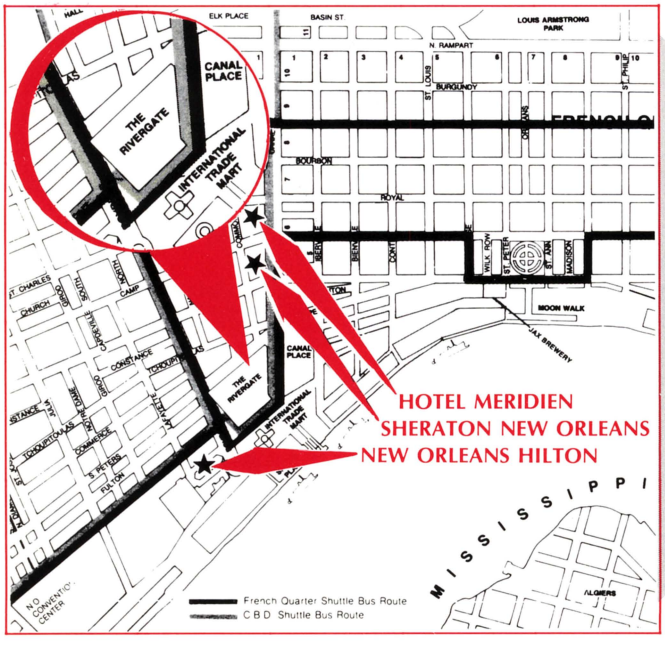
PLANTATION POTPOURRI

Take a trip back in time, and discover the history and heritage of plantation life as it was along the Mississippi in the mid-1800's. Visit the San Francisco Plantation built in 1856 and marvel at its "old" Creole embellishments, and the Tezcuco Plantation built in 1855, fashioned after the Greek Revival period. Enjoy a leisurely lunch as you bask in the aura of an antebellum plantation. **COST: $35**

SUNDAY, MARCH 22 — 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

CREOLE COOKERY

Friends and spouses of ACME '87 attendees will be able to sink their teeth into this special Creole Cookery class. Satisfy your culinary curiosity about native New Orleans cuisine, as you learn how to create everything creole from pralines to jumbalaya! You'll experience classic creole cuisine as you lunch on the distinctive New Orleans delicacies prepared especially for you. The cost, which includes lunch, is $35.



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

ACME '87 attendees can bask in the luxury of some of New Orlean's finest hotels. Special rates have been negotiated for ACME '87 attendees at the Sheraton New Orleans, the New Orleans Hilton and the Meridien hotels. All rooms and suites are under the control of ACME Show Management to ensure equitable distribution. Special rates apply to only those reservation forms received by FEBRUARY 16, 1987.

HOTEL	SINGLE	DOUBLE	SUITES
Hotel Meridien	$93	$93	None Available
New Orleans Hilton	$96-$106-$120	$106-$116-$130	$290-$475
Sheraton New Orleans	$92	$92	$150-475

Suite rates are available upon request.
All rooms are subject to state and local taxes.
The rates shown includes an ACME upcharge to cover the cost of processing and handling housing requests.

BADGE REGISTRATION FORM

AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION

SAVE $5.00 REGISTER TODAY!

Photocopy this form to register additional personnel

Complete and return the coupon below with your check for $10.00 per person (U.S. FUNDS), made payable to:
AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION, 16066 South Park Avenue, South Holland, IL 60473 USA.

MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 20, 1987

Name _____

Title _____

Firm _____

Only 21 characters including spaces will appear on your badge.

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country _____ Telephone _____ Telex _____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of $ _____.

Please mail my personalized badge of admission.

NOTE: $5.00 FEE TO REPLACE LOST BADGES. *NO EXCEPTIONS.*

Check below your business classification:

1 ☐ Exhibitor
2 ☐ Manufacturer
3 ☐ Distributor/Management
4 ☐ Distributor/Sales
5 ☐ Arcade Operator
6 ☐ Route Owner/Operator
7 ☐ Technician
8 ☐ Trade Press
9 ☐ Other _____ (specify)

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SPOUSE PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM

AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION

Photocopy this form to register additional personnel

Complete and return the coupon below with your check made payable to:
AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION, 16066 South Park Avenue, South Holland, IL 60473 USA.

MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 20, 1987

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country _____ Telephone _____

Day of Event	No. of Tickets	Price	Total Cost
Friday 3/20	_____	$30.00	$ _____
Saturday 3/21	_____	$35.00	$ _____
Sunday 3/22	_____	$35.00	$ _____
		TOTAL COST	_____

Refer to the _____ descriptions contained within this brochure.

Enclosed is my check in the amount of $ _____ to attend _____ events.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION

Please type or print. Complete and return to AMERICAN COIN MACHINE EXPOSITION, 16066 South Park Avenue, South Holland, IL 60473 USA.

1. Please do not complete this form if you have already requested hotel accommodations.
2. If the hotels you have selected are not available, the Housing Bureau will assign you to the next best available hotel.
3. Reservations will be held only until 6:00 pm unless guaranteed by your company.
4. Should you fail to notify the hotel of a change in your arrival date, your reservations will be cancelled.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ACME HOUSING BUREAU WILL NOT ACCEPT PHONE RESERVATIONS.

TYPE ROOM*	OCCUPANTS	ARRIVAL DATE	DEPARTURE DATE

MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 16, 1987

Name _____

Title _____

Firm _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country _____ Telephone _____ Telex _____

*ROOM CODE:
S = Single bedded room.
D = Double, one double bed.
DD = Double/Double, 2 double beds.

HOTEL PREFERENCE

_____ 1ST CHOICE

_____ 2ND CHOICE

_____ 3RD CHOICE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

William T. Glasgow, Inc.
16066 South Park Avenue
South Holland, IL 60473

ACME '87 PUTS THE "OP" IN COIN-OP!

SHOW SPONSORS

THE AMERICAN AMUSEMENT MACHINE ASSOCIATION, the national trade organization representing manufacturers and distributors of coin-operated amusement machines, has become a strong and effective voice for this unique segment of the American entertainment industry.

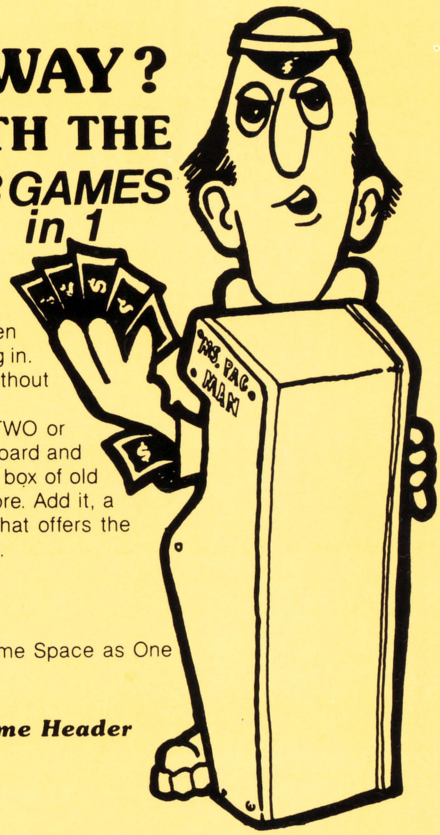
SKYBIRD is a leading publisher in the coin-operated entertainment industry, as well as a past promoter of coin-operated trade events. The interface of Skybird's past experience as sponsor and producer of the AOE Show and present capacity as publisher of Play Meter Magazine provides a unique medium for ACME to gain high visibility and recognition as a leading coin-operated industry event.

SHOW MANAGEMENT

WILLIAM T. GLASGOW, INC.
16066 South Park Avenue
South Holland, IL 60473
312/333-9292
Telex: (ITT) 4943831 BG UI

WHY THROW $MONEY$ AWAY?
OLD GAMES CAN EARN AGAIN WITH THE MULTI-SYSTEM CONVERSION KIT.

3 GAMES in 1



HERE'S HOW:

Take a look around your shop and you'll probably see old all-time favorite game logic boards (MS. PAC MAN, GALAGA, DIG DUG, SON SON etc.) sitting on a shelf or piled on a forgotten box. They are victims of a new game conversion that has put you out of profits they used to bring in. But now there is a way to put them back on location and have them earning money again without sacrificing the new game conversion.

The Multi-System circuit consolidates game logic boards, enabling the installation of TWO or THREE games in ONE cabinet. On your next conversion, instead of taking out the old game board and throwing it in a box to collect dust; leave it in the cabinet and add your new game. Go to that box of old scrapped games and pick out one that was popular but just couldn't stand on its own anymore. Add it, a Multi-System circuit and a selection button on the playing panel. You then have a cabinet that offers the player a choice of three games, the new one or one of the old favorites that we all enjoyed.

HERE'S WHY:

- Old Game Logic Boards Continue to Make Money Instead of Being Scrapped
- Three Low Earning Games can Make One Profitable Cabinet • Three Games Use the Same Space as One
- Games are Taxed Per Cabinet Not Per Game

MULTI-SYSTEM KIT INCLUDES: Switching Circuit, Wire Harness, & Game Header
ONLY $235.00 -Money Back Guarantee- ***ALL YOU Add Is The Scrap!!!***

PRO CIRCUITRY

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GAME·ALARM

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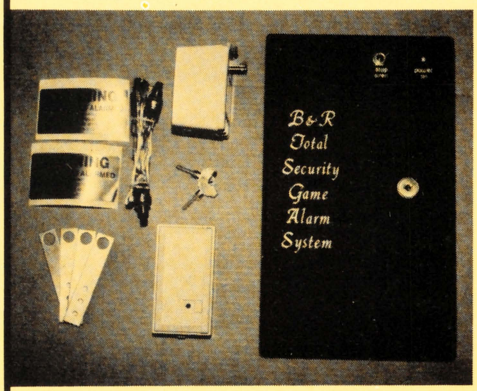

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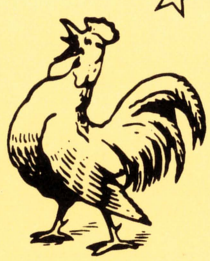

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